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INTERNATIONAL REVIEW

OF THE RED CROSS

JAG SCHOOL

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Apropos of the postponement of the 26th International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent

“Man is destined to think and
act amidst uncertainty and the
unforeseen.”

(*Edgar Morin*)

The postponement of the 26th International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent, which was to have taken place in Budapest, has already given rise to a number of analyses, and explanations have been furnished to those who were to have taken part.

In this issue of the *International Review of the Red Cross* we have the opportunity to encourage further reflection, within the Movement and with the governments, on the lessons to be learned from the Budapest experience, and to report on the important meetings held by the Movement's components in the Hungarian capital.

The Council of Delegates in particular adapted immediately to the change in circumstances. The prolongation of the session and the lively and constructive discussions that ensued demonstrated the importance of enhancing the role of this forum. This was without doubt one of the favourable consequences of the postponement.

Some of the items on the Conference agenda were the subject of interesting debate among the Movement's members, but it was nevertheless apparent that this was no substitute for dialogue with the governments. Of course, opinions may vary as to the importance of that dialogue. This is why we should first examine once again why

the International Conference is held,¹ and only then reflect on the conditions to be met before starting actual preparations.

Why hold International Conferences of the Red Cross and Red Crescent?

The International Conference affords a unique opportunity to focus the attention of States on the victims the Movement serves.

Of course, dialogue with the States is not limited to those few days every four years. The National Societies usually have frequent contact with their respective governments, and the ICRC is constantly in touch with the governments of the countries in which it is carrying out humanitarian activities, with any other governments involved and with those financing its operations. It is also in touch with almost every government in the world in connection with the promotion and dissemination of humanitarian law. The major difference between those bilateral contacts and the Conference, however, is that the latter makes decisions which affect the entire international community. Richard Perruchoud has written a thesis on the significance of Conference resolutions,² and it is not my intention to summarize what he says here. What is clear — and several diplomats have confirmed it — is that the Conference obliges the governments to state publicly where they stand on the general or specific problems put before them. Any move to develop humanitarian law or to strengthen the instruments for its application must perforce be dealt with by the International Conference. It is also at International Conferences that the international community makes commitments on National Society matters, in particular the development of the weakest among them.

¹ In this respect, it is useful to turn back to what was written after the 25th International Conference, in particular in the following publications: de Tscharnier, Bénédicte, «La Croix-Rouge internationale après la XXV^e Conférence internationale de la Croix-Rouge», *Hispo*, Booklet 9, Association d'histoire et de science politique, Bern, pp. 29-46; Moreillon, Jacques, «Suspension of the government delegation of the Republic of South Africa at the Twenty-fifth International Conference of the Red Cross (Geneva, 1986) — Different perceptions of the same event», *International Review of the Red Cross*, No. 257, March-April 1987, pp. 133-151; Sandoz, Yves, «Analyse juridique de la décision de suspendre la délégation gouvernementale sud-africaine de la XXV^e Conférence internationale de la Croix-Rouge», *Annuaire français de Droit International*, vol. XXXII, 1986, pp. 591-602.

² Perruchoud, Richard, *Les Résolutions des Conférences internationales de la Croix-Rouge*, Henry Dunant Institute, Geneva, 1979, 470 pp.

The postponement of an International Conference has no immediate tangible effect, but were we to abandon such conferences altogether, in the long run the Movement would become indistinguishable from the countless other humanitarian organizations. Moreover, the ICRC would probably lose the special status as custodian of international humanitarian law that it has enjoyed since the origins of the law.

That in turn would undermine the Movement's international position, and humanitarian law would inevitably fall prey to increasing politicization. And all this would obviously be to the detriment of the victims who are the Movement's primary concern. So the stakes are high.

We should bear these matters in mind when examining the conditions which must be met before preparations for an International Conference can begin.

Prerequisites to be met

Several National Societies were traumatized by the events which led to the suspension of the South African government delegation from the 25th International Conference in Geneva in 1986. Indeed, the political debate which took place at the Conference was seen by the general public in many countries as a sign that the Movement itself was becoming politicized.

Those reactions, and the incomprehension of many volunteers, gave rise to feelings of unease on the part of numerous National Societies. This certainly influenced the Standing Commission's decision to postpone the 26th Conference for fear that a similar dispute would break out on the form of Palestinian participation.

In taking its decision, the Standing Commission avoided the risk of political discussion but created another problem, this time essentially with the States. Governments are accustomed to that kind of political debate, and *it would never even occur to them* to put off a long-planned meeting for such a reason. The governments were involved in the preparations for the Budapest Conference, in some cases very actively, and the decision to postpone it took them by surprise.

On the basis of their reactions we can say that the governments understood the Movement's special sensitivity in this area and therefore why the decision was made. But they will not countenance a repeat performance of what happened in Budapest, or even run the risk of such an occurrence.

Government administrations are overburdened as it is and take a poor view of being made to work for nothing. If we want an International Conference, we must make a clear commitment that we will go ahead with it no matter what happens.

In other words, we must find a way of protecting the Movement from the adverse impact of stormy debates like the one that took place in Geneva, and we must give the governments our word that the experience of Budapest will not be repeated.

How to avoid a repetition of what happened at the 1986 Geneva Conference?

One idea which has been mooted is that the date of the Conference should be set only once all problems of participation have been resolved. This is obviously unrealistic, and would in fact amount to abandoning the Conference altogether. The pace of events in the modern world is such that no definitive solution for this type of problem could be found one or two years in advance, the minimum amount of time required to organize and make practical arrangements for a conference of this scope.

In the article from which the introductory quote is taken, Edgar Morin makes a very pertinent statement: “(...) effective action always involves a risk, which calls for a strategy, i.e., the drawing up of a scenario which can be adapted to changing circumstances”.³

If the Movement wants the International Conference — and we have clearly expressed our conviction that the Conference is necessary — then it must be prepared to take the risk involved. We must be courageous, but we need not be foolhardy. We must have a scenario, a plan which puts all the odds on our side. This means that we first have to *identify* the risk, to know exactly what it is we want to avoid.

There are in fact two dangers: first that the Movement's components will be forced to debate an essentially political matter, and secondly that such a debate will give the general public the impression that the Movement is becoming politicized.

³ Morin, Edgar, *Le Monde*, 26 November 1991, p. 2.

Keeping the Movement out of political controversy

Political argument represents a real threat to the principle of neutrality, and is a potential danger for the principle of independence in a situation where government and National Society delegations are sitting side by side.

Although there can never be a guarantee that no political debate will take place, everything possible must be done to make sure that questions relating to participation are negotiated and settled by the States before the Conference. Intensive consultations with the States did take place in the months leading up to the Budapest Conference, and in fact acceptable solutions had been found to almost all the many problems concerning participation. Only the negotiations on the form of Palestinian participation — admittedly a particularly thorny issue — ended in failure.

Is there a better way to handle this kind of issue? This is the question on which our discussions with the States must focus. There are several interesting possibilities. For example, a group of States could be asked to examine such matters beforehand with a view to proposing solutions to the Conference, or to convening a preparatory conference, participation in which could be limited to the States. In addition, *ad hoc* agreements on the procedure to be followed during the Conference in respect of a specific problem which had not been solved beforehand would probably make it easier to settle any such issue rapidly and without contention.

Specific procedures will in any case have to be set up in preparation for the 26th Conference, but the possibility of structural change involving amendment of the Movement's Statutes should also be considered. The Statutes would have to be amended if the Standing Commission were to be enlarged to include State representatives, or a Commission of States created to deal with problems connected with the participation of States party to the Geneva Conventions, or a preparatory conference convened. We must naturally think carefully before embarking on amendments to the Statutes, as this entails a vast amount of preparatory work and would have to be accepted by a two-thirds majority of the members of the Conference present and voting.⁴ It would be ill-advised, however, to rule out such a possibility from the outset.

⁴ See Statutes of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, Art. 20.

Protecting the Movement's image

As concerns the second danger, i.e., that the public would be left with the *image* of a politicized Movement, several proposals merit consideration. First, the governments' role at the Conference would have to be clearly explained, and this would obviously be much easier if the governments agreed to assume a higher profile in solving problems of participation, as mentioned above. The Movement could also decide in advance not to take part in a vote on participation, thereby clearly demonstrating that it remains outside politics. In fact, the ICRC's representatives in Budapest, who were not in favour of postponing the Conference, suggested this course of action to the Standing Commission.

Here again, apart from the measures to be envisaged immediately, it would be useful to consider, with the reservations expressed above, whether or not amendment of the Statutes would improve the public's perception of International Conferences in the long term. In this respect, one member of the Standing Commission drew attention to the somewhat equivocal nature of the Conference's name. He pointed out that the name contained no indication of government participation, but suggested that the Conference was an internal meeting of the Movement's components.⁵ Going even further, the same member criticized the definition of the Conference as the Movement's "supreme deliberative body",⁶ because it gives the impression that the States party to the Geneva Conventions are an integral part of the Movement. Although they were discussed at length when the revised Statutes were adopted in 1986, these questions call for further study.

Conclusion

The Movement, international humanitarian law and, above all, the victims which both seek to assist stand to lose a great deal if there are no more International Conferences. It is therefore vital that everything possible be done to preserve this very special link and opportunity for dialogue between the Movement's components and the States party to the Geneva Conventions.

⁵ See Hantos, János, «The Fundamental Principles are vital to the unity of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement», *International Review of the Red Cross*, No. 275, March-April 1990, pp. 86-94, esp. at p. 93.

⁶ Article 8 of the Movement's Statutes.

The wide range of topics which were to have been dealt with in Budapest, the far-reaching changes which have taken place on the international scene since the 1986 Conference, and ongoing discussions with regard to coordination of humanitarian assistance, in particular within the UN and the European Community, make the holding of the 26th International Conference a matter of urgency. Taking into account the time needed to prepare for such a gathering, a reasonable target date would be 1993.

It should be possible, through extensive dialogue with the States, to devise procedures giving them greater responsibility for solving problems of participation, which are essentially political in nature.

The Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement must take a firm position and show the States that it is determined to hold the Conference come what may. By so doing, it will demonstrate that it is ready to face up to the realities of our time. On the other hand, showing itself fearful of confronting the governments at International Conferences would project a feeble image. A strong National Society, one whose roots run deep and whose energy and work are appreciated by the public, will be better able to explain the purpose of International Conferences and the problems inherent in any dialogue with the States.

Thus, in demonstrating its attachment to the International Conference, the Movement must also reaffirm its intention to *become stronger itself*, so as to meet the challenges of today's world not only on the international but also on the *national* level. Street children, child prostitution, refugee problems, the poverty affecting broad sectors of the population even in rich countries: the potential for National Society endeavour is enormous. The best way for the Societies to strengthen their bonds with the people, who must feel that the Red Cross or the Red Crescent share their concerns, is to tackle these problems with compassion and enthusiasm, always seeking new spheres of activity. The study on the Movement's future decided on by the Council of Delegates will certainly produce constructive ideas as to the best means of meeting these challenges.

Any shock-waves generated at International Conferences will be much more easily absorbed by a strong Movement. By taking the conscious decision to make preparations for the 26th International Conference, the Movement will display renewed self-confidence and resolution.

There is nevertheless a slight possibility that a majority of the Movement's members will decide to back away from the issue and give up the International Conference in its present form. In that event, the ICRC would be obliged to consider other types of dialogue with

the governments. But it would be reluctant to do so, for it is convinced that the International Conference in its present tried-and-tested form, perhaps with some minor changes, is the best solution.

We are looking forward to the 26th International Conference!

Yves Sandoz

Member of the Executive Board

Director

Principles, Law and Relations

with the Movement

ICRC

STATUTORY MEETINGS OF THE INTERNATIONAL RED CROSS AND RED CRESCENT MOVEMENT

(Budapest, 25-30 November 1991)

On 26 November 1991, the Standing Commission of the Red Cross and Red Crescent announced that it had been forced to postpone the 26th International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent, owing to the risk "that political disagreement between governments on participation could jeopardize its outcome" (see *IRRC* No. 285, November-December 1991, p. 634).

In view of that decision, the meeting of the Council of Delegates of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, which brings together representatives of the National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (the Federation)¹ assumed special significance. When it met on 27 November to examine what effects the postponement of the International Conference would have on the work of the statutory meetings of the Movement, the Standing Commission decided to extend the Council of Delegates session — originally scheduled for 28 November only — up to and including Saturday 30 November, and to place on its agenda several items which should have been dealt with by the International Conference. The Commission felt, in particular, that an assessment of the consequences of the postponement of the Conference for the future of the Movement, in the short and longer term, should begin during the discussions in Budapest.

The *Review* is publishing below an account of the opening ceremony and the proceedings of the Council of Delegates (pp. 15-42), together with the full text of the resolutions it adopted (pp. 43-65).

¹ Formerly the League of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies. The new name was adopted by the League General Assembly at its VIIIth session (Budapest, 25-28 November). See report below (pp. 66-73).

The Council of Delegates was preceded by the VIIIth session of the General Assembly of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies. A summary of its proceedings appears on pages 66-73.

The reader will also find (see pp. 74-93) the text of the report entitled "Respect for international humanitarian law: ICRC review of five years of activity (1987-1991)", which the ICRC had intended to submit to the Conference.

Meeting of the Council of Delegates

(Budapest, 28-30 November 1991)

The Council of Delegates held its biennial session in Budapest from 28 to 30 November 1991. More than 120 National Societies were represented. The delegations of the ICRC and the Federation were led by their respective Presidents, Mr. Cornelio Sommaruga and Mr. Mario Villarroel Lander.

I. OPENING CEREMONY

The session was opened on 28 November by *Dr. Ahmad Abu-Goura*, Chairman of the Standing Commission of the Red Cross and Red Crescent. Referring to the regrettable but unavoidable decision to postpone the 26th International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent, Dr. Abu-Goura stated that now more than ever the Movement had to forge ahead with its humanitarian mission, at a time when millions of people were suffering from the lethal effects of violence, poverty and hunger, terrible weapons continued to be manufactured and used, and over thirty armed conflicts were still raging in different parts of the world.

In conclusion, Dr. Abu-Goura expressed the hope that in this threatening environment the Movement could rely on the support of young people to perpetuate the principles and ideals of the Red Cross and Red Crescent in favour of peace.

Following the solemn reading of the Fundamental Principles of the Red Cross and the Red Crescent by a representative of the host National Society, the Council of Delegates elected as its Chairman *Mr. Rezso Sztuchlik*, President of the Executive Committee and Secretary General of the Hungarian Red Cross. He referred to the difficult challenge faced by the Movement in the late twentieth century to improve and develop humanitarian work in a world increasingly dominated by politics.

The President of the ICRC, *Mr. Cornelio Sommaruga*, then delivered the address that appears below.

"The Council of Delegates is a unique forum where all the components of our Movement can listen to one another, exchange ideas and seek common ground when opinions differ. It takes on an even greater importance today, since our meeting follows on an extremely regrettable decision that the Standing Commission was compelled to take. As you all know, I am referring to the fact that the International Conference is being postponed, at a time when humanitarian needs throughout the world are overwhelming. This most unfortunate event is the result of a political battle of wills which took place at the expense of the world's largest apolitical organization — our own. Indeed, the International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent is so far the only apolitical forum in which those dedicated to the humanitarian cause can engage in a broad dialogue with the representatives of governments the world over.

But although this event — or should I say non-event — is disappointing, the ICRC, for its part, refuses to jump to any negative conclusions for the medium and long term. The ICRC is still confident that the States are committed to supporting its efforts and humanitarian activities in behalf of the victims of armed conflicts, as they undertook to do in becoming party to the Geneva Conventions. The ICRC also wishes to express its gratitude to all the governments that over the past few weeks have spared no effort in seeking ways to enable the Conference to take place, thereby demonstrating their firm dedication to the Red Cross and Red Crescent cause.

The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement is alive and well. Millions of men and women — be they volunteers, first-aiders, leaders, staff or delegates of National Societies and of the Movement's international components — are doing remarkable work in pursuing their common goal, namely, to prevent and alleviate the suffering of fellow human beings and protect human life, health and dignity. We are here, in the Council of Delegates, to talk about our activities in a society undergoing profound political and economic change which is a source of considerable hope in many parts of the world, especially in countries where we can see growing respect for the rights of the individual and a loosening of State control. But the hope that many regions of the globe are moving towards a more humane society is overshadowed by the fact that human suffering in all its forms remains universal, that it is often caused by man himself, and that the means to alleviate it are pitifully inadequate.

Disregard for rules which should help prevent or lessen suffering caused by violence is so widespread that concern for the problem has become almost commonplace. This Council of Delegates provides us with a prime opportunity to convey to the governments — and hence to the international community

following our deliberations — any suggestions and proposals we formulate together during our discussions.

* * *

I am happy that this joint effort, which will involve giving serious thought to a number of issues, exchanging views and acting on our conclusions, is being conducted here in Budapest, under your guidance, Mr. Chairman. The ICRC greatly appreciates the hospitality and enthusiasm with which the Hungarian Red Cross and the Hungarian authorities have organized this meeting within the extremely short time at their disposal. We regret that the Conference cannot take place as planned, all the more so because the warmth with which we were received should have shown and confirmed to the governments, too, that the Hungarian Red Cross and the Hungarian people have always been devoted to the Red Cross and Red Crescent cause.

Let us not forget that as a result of the political division of the Hungarian nation in the last century, Hungarians fought on both sides in the war between Austrian forces and those of France and Italy, the battle of Solferino being a particularly cruel episode. The desire to heal that wound explains in part the great success of Henry Dunant's idea in Hungary and the fact that by the end of the century the Hungarian Red Cross had become — and has remained — one of the most active and dedicated National Societies in Europe.

Allow me to mention briefly two events connected with the Red Cross in this country, which illustrate Hungary's pioneering role in promoting the humanitarian ideal and which, I am sure, augur well for the Council's work, since they are of topical importance even today. Hungary, together with Belgium, was the first country to enact special rules providing for the protection of the red cross emblem and preventing its misuse. And it was in Hungary that in 1919 the ICRC first visited political detainees, thereby extending its humanitarian work to a category of victims that is very much exposed to suffering, isolation and arbitrary treatment. Since then, the ICRC has been called upon to provide protection and assistance in Hungary within the context of other dramatic events: this is something we have not forgotten.

* * *

We have a full agenda before us and many of the items will undoubtedly lead to discussions on relations between the Red Cross and Red Crescent and the States. Before we proceed, allow me to extend my warmest greetings and

the best wishes of the ICRC to all the National Societies that are taking part in the Council for the first time and also to those National Societies whose former recognition has been confirmed.

In my opinion, the desire of governments and of our Movement to give greater consideration to the problems involved in humanitarian action is well founded. The discussions on international coordination that are now under way in various fora are indeed necessary and important. However, such consideration must proceed in an atmosphere of serenity, so that every argument can be properly weighed. Care must be taken in particular to ensure that the difficulties encountered in international assistance do not prompt States to monopolize the issue, with the danger of politicization that this would entail.

Enthusiasm should not be curbed, but more effectively channelled. Humanitarian work must not become the prerogative of bureaucrats, however well-intentioned they may be.

The International Committee of the Red Cross, for its part, recognizes the importance of increased cooperation and supports recent efforts in this direction. At the same time, it considers that it is vital for the Red Cross, particularly in situations of armed conflict, to retain complete independence in carrying out its work.

* * *

The issue of international coordination requires an overall view of the problems to be solved. This brings me to a concept that is of particular concern to me, that of solidarity.

No one can remain indifferent to the sight of a starving child or a person mutilated by a mine. Such tragedies, wherever they occur, must not be accepted as inevitable.

The first and indeed legitimate reaction to this suffering is usually to blame the soldiers who indiscriminately destroy crops or lay mines. But what about the authorities who allow this to happen? Or the people who sell weapons without worrying about how they will be used? What about the failure of the media to report on certain conflicts because interest in them has waned? Or the complacency of governments towards violations of humanitarian law? What about the wealthy nations that cannot be bothered about the poor ones?

Current efforts to promote the implementation of international humanitarian law, which recognizes the right to assistance of all those who are deprived of goods essential to their survival, are certainly to be commended, and the focus of renewed discussions on removing obstacles to relief opera-

tions is fully justified. However, we must also ensure that these humanitarian endeavours are supported by public opinion and governments. Indifference also claims lives and must be denounced.

While there is a limit to the problems with which one can deal, and while it is important to empathize with the suffering of those closest to oneself, an institution like the International Committee of the Red Cross is duty bound to stress that there are no good or bad victims, only men, women and children who are in distress and deserve impartial attention and compassion.

* * *

I have highlighted solidarity first and foremost because it is a key component of the philosophy of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and because it embraces the fundamental principles of humanity, impartiality and universality. But should not solidarity also play a prominent role in international politics?

I have already mentioned that in our society violence is rife, but it is far from being the only scourge. Many of you here could bear more eloquent witness to the ills afflicting modern society, the fight against which is our Movement's raison d'être.

Is it not our duty to help bring about a universal awareness of the fact that the general interest surpasses individual concerns? Indeed, we must do everything in our power to avoid an impasse in which, for fear of the poor, the rich become impervious to their despair. This is why we must champion the cause of solidarity.

I have no desire to plunge the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement into a lengthy political debate. To assist the victims of war regardless of its causes constitutes the very essence of humanitarian law; this approach remains a basic condition of successful humanitarian action.

Nevertheless those broader issues must be raised because humanitarian action, for which there is an ever-increasing demand, will no longer be able to meet expectations unless we deal with the root causes of the suffering it seeks to alleviate.

How can we expect young, uneducated and often hungry combatants who face a bleak future and are devoid of hope to understand and spontaneously comply with humanitarian rules? Let us not forget that some of our delegates have paid for their humanitarian commitment with their health and in some cases even with their lives. Others have been subjected to the terrible ordeal of abduction. No institution has the right to disregard the safety of those who serve it!

Humanitarian action cannot compensate for political shortcomings. We must not fall prey to the illusion that it is possible, in the long term, to control the effects without tackling the causes. This is the message we must — all of us together — convey to the governments. They must heed that message, even if they are not present in this room to hear us voice our concerns.

And what about us in the Movement? As regards the ICRC, I would like to tell you that we are aware, both in Geneva and in our 52 delegations throughout the world, that greater imagination and energy are needed if we are to further enhance our efficiency and absolute impartiality. We must also do our best — together with many of you here today — to strengthen the less developed National Societies.

Every one of us must make sure that the tone of our discussions and the spirit of cooperation shown during our proceedings give hope to all those who are following this Council of Delegates around the world.

Ladies and Gentlemen, we can no longer allow cynicism and indifference to human suffering to take the upper hand. I urge you all, once this gathering is over on Saturday, to go from being delegates to the Council to being delegates of the Council, to take this humanitarian spirit back to your respective countries and thus give fresh impetus to the humanitarian mobilization which my predecessor, the late Alexandre Hay, launched in 1985. We shall promote the resolutions we adopt and the new opportunities we create. As men and women members of the Red Cross and Red Crescent, we will do our utmost to reach and help those of our fellow human beings who are suffering and, as citizens, insist that international humanitarian law be fully respected.

I would like to conclude by saying that it is the Movement in its entirety that must demand that humanity receive renewed and fuller attention from the powers that be; we must make sure of this, for what is foremost in our minds — and always will be — is per humanitatem ad pacem”.

Mr. Mario Villarroel Lander, President of the Federation, referred to the challenges facing the Movement in a world undergoing profound and disquieting change. He drew attention to the growing number of vulnerable groups in the world, especially in developing countries. The causes were manifold: the population explosion, the deterioration of the environment, economic recession, food shortages and disease, all phenomena conducive to social unrest and violence.

Mr. Villarroel felt that it was the Movement's duty to render people at risk less vulnerable and to take action to reverse the degrading tendency to treat the population of developing countries as outsiders, that is, it must “fight for social justice among men and among nations. Underdevelopment is a scandal; it is quite incompat-

ible with the social, scientific and technological development of modern man”.

After depicting the wretched conditions in which people were living in various parts of the world and describing recent activities carried out by the Federation to help refugees, displaced persons and the victims of natural and technological disasters, Mr. Villarroel expressed his satisfaction at the progress made by the Federation in building up its presence throughout the world and increasing the efficiency of its relief operations. He appealed for better coordination between the Movement and non-governmental organizations in general, especially in the context of assistance operations. In that connection, he was glad to note the steps that had been taken to strengthen cooperation between the ICRC and the Federation, such as the meeting in Yverdon-les-Bains (Switzerland) last September between the members of the ICRC Assembly and those of the Federation's Executive Council. During the meeting it was decided to set in motion a dynamic process to shape the future of the Movement — now a more pressing issue than ever.

President Villarroel then stressed the importance of preventive measures, which called for a strengthening of the operational capacity of the National Societies and improved cooperation between them the better to meet common challenges. The Federation's Strategic Workplan for the Nineties dealt with this. In conclusion, he expressed the conviction that the Movement could do much to ensure that community development was perceived not as a phenomenon imposed from outside but as a process intended to maximize local capabilities by means of strong and efficient National Societies. “To attain that objective, we must show even greater solidarity within the Federation and the Movement”, he said.

The opening addresses were followed by the presentation ceremony for the Henry Dunant Medal, awarded as a tribute to people who have rendered outstanding services to the Movement or whose commitment to the Red Cross and Red Crescent has cost them their lives. The medals were presented by Dr. Ahmad Abu-Goura, Chairman of the Standing Commission (*see box*).

Henry Dunant Medal

Twelve people were awarded the Henry Dunant Medal, seven of them posthumously.

They are the following:

- **Dr. János Hantos**, President of the National Executive Committee of the Hungarian Red Cross from 1977 to 1990, member of the Standing Commission of the Red Cross and Red Crescent since 1981.
- **G. Baron Kraijenhoff**, President of the Netherlands Red Cross from 1966 to 1986, Vice-President of the League of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies from 1973 to 1985.
- **Mrs. Kamar Kazoon Choura**, Vice-President of the Syrian Red Crescent and member since its founding in 1946.
- **Carlos Alberto Vera Martínez**, M.D., member of the Paraguayan Red Cross since 1946.
- **Mr. William Cassis**, Director of Administration and Personnel at the League of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies for 25 years.

Posthumously:

- **Mr. Alexandre Hay**, ICRC President from 1976 to 1987, later Chairman of the Commission on the Red Cross, Red Crescent and Peace.
- **Mr. Peter Altwegg**, ICRC delegate, who died in tragic circumstances on 6 October 1990 while on mission in Somalia.
- **Mr. Walter Berweger**, ICRC delegate, killed in an ambush in the Philippines on 19 January 1990.
- **Mr. Mohammad Osman**, employee of the ICRC orthopaedic centre in Kabul (Afghanistan) since 1987, killed in a rocket attack on 16 August 1990, while on duty.
- **Mr. Abdul Qayum Faqir Yar**, employee of the ICRC's Tracing Agency in Afghanistan, killed on 1 September 1990, while carrying out his duties.
- **Mr. Juanito Patong**, working for the joint ICRC/Philippine National Red Cross operation, killed in the same incident as Walter Berweger.
- **Mr. Graeme Whyte**, CBE, former President, Honorary President and Treasurer of the New Zealand Red Cross.

II. PROCEEDINGS OF THE COUNCIL OF DELEGATES

The meeting of 29 November began with elections. Mr. Cornelio Sommaruga, President of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), and Mr. Mario Villarroel Lander, President of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, were elected Vice-Chairmen of the Council of Delegates. Mr. Jean-Louis Cayla (ICRC) and Mr. William Cassis (Federation) were elected Secretaries of the Council.

The Council of Delegates then took up its agenda and discussed the following items:

1. The future of the Movement

The Council of Delegates held a general debate on the postponement of the 26th International Conference and its implications. It then discussed the position, the image and the unity of the Movement in a changing world and its mandates for the future, with particular reference to its contribution to peace and to the protection of human rights.

a) The postponement of the 26th International Conference

Dr. Ahmad Abu-Goura, after mentioning the mandate of the Standing Commission he chairs, described the difficulties raised by Palestinian participation in the Conference and explained why the latter had had to be postponed. The decision to defer the Conference had finally been taken after several meetings and many moves and initiatives, when it became clear that it was going to prove impossible to resolve the matter before the Conference opened and thus avoid the danger of controversy during the Conference itself.

On behalf of the ICRC, *Mr. Yves Sandoz*, Director and member of the Executive Board, outlined the institution's position following the postponement, which he qualified as a failure that could not be overlooked. Noting that political problems relating to participation were inherent in the International Conference, he felt that the Movement should immediately consider whether there were ways of guaranteeing that such matters were resolved beforehand, so as to prevent disputes of an essentially political nature from poisoning the atmosphere of the Conference, interfering with calm consideration of the major humani-

tarian issues due for discussion and undermining the Movement's neutrality and public image.

How could such guarantees be provided? The Standing Commission, bound by the principle of neutrality, was not competent to decide political issues; it therefore had to encourage the community of States to resolve any political difficulties arising in the run-up to the Conference. On that point, the speaker drew attention to the intensive efforts of the Standing Commission members and the parties directly concerned to resolve the differences which had emerged in the international community with regard to the form that Palestinian participation should take.

Mr. Sandoz added that various procedures might be envisaged, for example, the setting up of a group of government representatives before the Conference, or agreement among components of the Movement to abstain from participating in debates and votes on controversial political issues; although it was doubtful that such measures could fully guarantee avoidance of the adverse effects mentioned above.

Hence, the real question was whether the Movement was sufficiently committed to dialogue with governments in the context of the International Conference to take the risks which, even if they could be mitigated, were inherent in the situation. Clearly, the Movement could not go on claiming to have an exceptional forum for dialogue with governments unless it was willing from the outset to take the risks involved and *follow them through to the end*: what had happened in Budapest must not be repeated.

The ICRC felt that, given its special mandate with respect to international humanitarian law, such dialogue with the governments was essential. Did all the National Societies feel the same way?

In the coming months what had to be done was to work out, both with governments and within the Movement, forms of future dialogue with a view to setting a new date for the 26th International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent, or to establish the bases of some other form of dialogue.

The Secretary General of the Federation, *Mr. Pär Stenbäck*, said that the Movement had to learn to function in a political environment while maintaining its independence. Doubting that most governments were really interested in the International Conference, he felt that some means had to be found of pursuing less formal and more frequent talks with them, perhaps through regular contacts between National Societies and their respective governments or through other procedures yet to be devised.

Dr. János Hantos of the Hungarian Red Cross, a member of the Standing Commission, expressed the opinion that the Council of Delegates should become the supreme body of the Movement. The Movement had for some time been experiencing a conflict between its principle of independence and the position adopted by States, which had a statutory right to vote at the International Conference. Dealing with subjects relating to international humanitarian law called for contacts and exchanges of views with governments, he said, and it would therefore be appropriate to maintain dialogue in a forum similar to the International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent. However, the name of the Conference was misleading and should be changed.

b) The work, image and unity of the Movement

For the first time in the Movement's history, and at the request of a group of National Societies, the members of the Federation's Executive Council and of the ICRC Assembly met on 31 August and 1 September 1991 in Yverdon-les-Bains, Switzerland, to consider measures to promote confidence-building among components of the Movement, to consolidate their activities and to enhance the image of the Red Cross and Red Crescent in the face of current challenges.

The Council of Delegates was informed of the discussions held at the meeting, which had taken place in an atmosphere of frankness and openness already dubbed "the spirit of Yverdon".

Mr. Pierre Keller, a member of the ICRC Assembly, stated in his report that a number of common concerns had emerged in the discussions conducted in three working groups. It had been recognized that tensions arising from the division of work between the components of the Movement and from its complex structure were harmful to the way the public perceived it. Similarly, there was agreement on the need to improve communication and working relationships and to foster better coordination within the Movement.

The debate which followed clearly showed that there was a pressing need for the Movement to adjust rapidly to a changing world and to find solutions to present-day problems. Emphasis was laid on the competition arising among the growing numbers of public and private humanitarian relief agencies. That was of course an incentive to greater effort but meant that the Movement had to be ready and willing to meet the challenge.

Finally, it was stressed that the diversity of the Movement's various components and the dissensions among them were creating some confusion in the public mind, undermining public support and proving harmful to the principles of unity and universality which were the Movement's major assets.

The Council of Delegates therefore decided to set up a Study Group on the future of the Movement, whose role would be to "advise on and recommend to the Council of Delegates a strategy for the Movement in response to emerging trends and evolving humanitarian issues".

The Study Group's terms of reference:

"1. To review, study, research and discuss current and future trends and issues in the humanitarian field with a view to achieving common positions on matters of concern to all components of the Movement.

2. To study governing and operating structures of the Movement and to suggest appropriate courses of action which will enable the Movement to carry out its humanitarian mandate with the utmost effectiveness and cohesion".

The Group was to be composed of five members from National Societies, appointed in their personal capacity by the President of the Federation, two members from the Federation and two members from the ICRC.

c) The Movement's contribution to peace

The Council of Delegates then heard the report of the Commission on the Red Cross, Red Crescent and Peace, which had met on 3 November under the chairmanship of Mr. Alan McLean, Secretary General of the Australian Red Cross. Mr. McLean was temporarily replacing the late Mr. Alexander Hay, who had chaired that Commission from April 1987 to August 1991.

The Commission had essentially pursued and completed its study on its own future role, activities and membership.

The exchanges of views among its members had led to a broad consensus on the need to maintain the Commission as a forum for deliberation and a special platform for dialogue within the Movement.

Similar agreement had been reached on the role of the Commission, which was to promote the implementation of the Programme of Action of the Red Cross and Red Crescent as a factor for peace and

the Fundamental Guidelines for the Movement's contribution to true peace in the world.

By consensus, the Commission had broadened its mandate to cover the following matters:

- dissemination and promotion of respect for international humanitarian law and the principles and ideals of the Movement;
- the Movement's role in promoting respect for human rights and the rights of refugees and minorities, and in situations not covered by international humanitarian law;
- humanitarian mobilization for respect of the fundamental rights of the individual;
- specific Red Cross and Red Crescent action to foster greater understanding between different cultures, ethnic, social and cultural groups.

The Commission would also fulfil any other task assigned to it by the Council of Delegates which fell within its mandate, and could submit proposals to the Council on studies to be undertaken.

The Commission then submitted a proposal on its composition, taking into account the principle of fair geographical distribution, the interest expressed by National Societies and the need to strike a balance between experienced and new members. So as to ensure a constant input of fresh ideas, it was further proposed that members should be regularly replaced.

The Council of Delegates adopted the conclusions of the Commission as to its role, tasks and working methods; it also decided that the future Commission would have sixteen members instead of the current fourteen, and that in order to increase National Society representation a quarter of its membership would be replaced every two years. Furthermore, the Chairman of the Commission would henceforward be elected by the Council.

The Council then elected *Mr. Maurice Aubert*, Vice-President of the ICRC, as Chairman of the Commission and appointed as members the National Societies of the following countries:

Australia	Korea (Dem. People's Rep.)
Brazil	Korea (Rep.)
Colombia	Malaysia
Egypt	Nigeria
Ethiopia	Paraguay
France	Sudan

Greece
Hungary

Sweden
Tunisia

Finally, the Council took note of the report on the World Campaign for the Protection of Victims of War introduced by *Mrs. Christina Magnuson*, Vice-President of the Swedish Red Cross. She stressed the success of the 8 May 1991 event *Light the darkness*, in which National Societies had played a particularly active part. Despite underfunding, the results of the Campaign could in general be considered positive.

The Council of Delegates adopted a resolution expressing appreciation for the worldwide effort in carrying out the World Campaign for the Protection of Victims of War and encouraging governments and the ICRC, in cooperation with the Federation and the National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, to take advantage of the impetus given by the campaign to intensify efforts to promote better understanding and knowledge of the situation of war victims and of international humanitarian law.

2. Regulations on the use of the emblem of the red cross or the red crescent by the National Societies

The Council of Delegates adopted the revised text, submitted by the ICRC, of the Regulations on the use of the emblem of the red cross or the red crescent by National Societies. These Regulations lay down the various ways in which the emblem may be used by National Societies, in accordance with the provisions of international humanitarian law and the Fundamental Principles of the Movement. They also provide answers to the many questions arising in National Societies as to the lawful and unlawful uses of the emblem.

The new Regulations emphasize the strict distinction drawn between the use of the emblem for purposes of protection and of identification. In its protective role it is intended to indicate medical and religious personnel and property, which must be respected and protected during armed conflict. Use of the emblem for identification serves to show that individuals or property have a connection with the Movement. Any confusion between the two uses must be avoided, particularly in wartime.

The Regulations specifically mention that before using the emblem for protective purposes, the National Society must obtain the agree-

ment of its country's authorities, with whom procedures for such use must be worked out.

The articles in the Regulations relating to the use of the emblem for publicity and fund-raising purposes have been developed in precise detail. All references to the "red lion and sun" have been removed.

The Resolution adopted by the Council of Delegates invites the ICRC to submit the Regulations to the States party to the Geneva Conventions, encouraging them to endorse the Regulations and, where necessary, to authorize their National Societies to observe them. It recommends that National Societies comply with the new Regulations, in accordance with national legislation, at the earliest possible date and invites them "to assist their governments in meeting their obligations under the Geneva Conventions with regard to the emblem, in particular to prevent its misuse, and to support the activities of the ICRC in that respect".

It should be noted that these Regulations are important and many National Societies have been asking for them for several years. They are the outcome of extensive consultation within the Movement and have met with a very favourable response in the Council of Delegates. It is to be hoped that all governments will give the new Regulations their approval.

3. Information policy of the Movement

A report on the Movement's Information Policy was submitted to the Council of Delegates by the Directors of the communications departments at the Federation and the ICRC.

In accordance with Council of Delegates Resolution 4 of 1989, the ICRC and the Federation had undertaken to create a framework conducive to the implementation of the Movement's Information Policy and Identity Programme. Significant progress had been made over the previous two years: a joint working group, the Public Support Group (PSG) with members from eight National Societies, the Federation and the ICRC, had been set up to:

- advise the ICRC, the Federation and the National Societies on any matters relating to communication and fund-raising;
- help the Movement to set priorities and select programmes to be carried out in those areas;

— propose guidelines for international fund-raising, for subsequent adoption by the Movement.

The PSG had produced a *Communicator's Guide*, drawn up mainly by the American Red Cross and designed to provide users with a compilation of theoretical and practical professional data, in relation to the Movement's Identity Programme. The Guide had several expository sections that defined the specific objectives of the Information Policy, and more practical sections that explained and illustrated ways and means of achieving effective communication regardless of the resources available to the National Society or institution concerned.

It was henceforth up to National Societies to adapt the Guide to their respective needs and make it an effective working tool for communicating the Movement's message.

Communication training workshops had been scheduled using the *Communicator's Guide*. The first regional seminar for National Societies' information officers in East and southern Africa had been held in Nairobi, Kenya, in September 1991.

Red Cross, Red Crescent magazine was also a vital support for the Information Policy. It needed a more solid foundation, however, one better suited to its expansion.

The Council of Delegates took note of these achievements; it recommended in particular that National Societies should contribute more to the financing and distribution of *Red Cross, Red Crescent*.

It was pointed out that *World Red Cross and Red Crescent Day* offered a particularly good opportunity for spreading the Movement's message. However, sound advance preparation was obviously needed for maximum impact on the public. The Council of Delegates approved the principle of a single general theme for a three-year period, with three annual sub-themes.

For 1993, 1994 and 1995, the overall theme chosen was "dignity for all". In 1993, the 8 May events would focus on "the vulnerable"; in 1994 on "our children's future" and in 1995 on "respect for women".

The Council of Delegates invited the ICRC and the Federation "to continue harmonizing their efforts in everything related to the conduct of information programmes of interest to the Movement, both regionally and internationally, so as to highlight more effectively the humanitarian work carried out throughout the world".

4. The Movement's participation in the 1992 Universal Exposition in Seville

The Universal Exposition due to be held in Seville from April to October 1992 affords an exceptional opportunity to explain and promote the message and activities of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement.

A report was submitted to the Council of Delegates on the work undertaken in preparation for the Movement's participation in EXPO '92, which was approved by the Council of Delegates in 1989. *Mrs. Carmen Mestre*, President of the Spanish Red Cross and Pavilion Commissioner since October 1990, gave the Council technical details about the construction of the Movement's Pavilion, its cost and content. The Pavilion was three storeys high with a surface area of 3,000 square metres; building work was already well under way despite the financial problems which had beset the project since it was launched.

The project included two programmes. One, managed by the Spanish Red Cross, consisted in setting up first-aid services for visitors. The other involved international volunteers and was under the responsibility of the International Promotion Bureau. It would deal directly with the public, covering in particular the welcoming of visitors, public relations and dissemination of the Red Cross and Red Crescent message.

The President of the Spanish Red Cross called upon National Societies to finance the participation of young volunteers in the international teams working at EXPO '92.

5. Dissemination

a) Respect for and dissemination of the Movement's Fundamental Principles

In accordance with Resolution 7 of the 1989 Council of Delegates, the ICRC continued its study on respect for and dissemination of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Fundamental Principles in close association with the National Societies, the Federation and the Henry Dunant Institute. In particular, it consulted the National Societies on the practical implementation of each of the seven principles. The replies received appeared in a report submitted to the Council of Delegates in Budapest, which was accompanied by a number of recommendations.

The Council took note of this second interim report and asked “the ICRC, in cooperation with the Federation, to support the National Societies’ efforts in implementing the Principles and to help them in particular to counter any pressure to which they may be subjected”. It further requested “the ICRC, in cooperation with the Federation, to continue the ongoing study with a view to setting out, in an updated commentary, the Movement’s common interpretation of the Principles”.

b) Guidelines for the dissemination of international humanitarian law and the principles and ideals of the Movement

In a joint report submitted to the Council of Delegates, the ICRC and the Federation gave an overview and assessment of the dissemination activities carried out over the previous fifteen years in accordance with the three successive programmes of action launched since 1978. These programmes had four basic objectives:

- to encourage States to ratify or accede to the Protocols additional to the Geneva Conventions;
- to consider through studies and research the legal and practical consequences of the provisions of the Protocols additional to the Geneva Conventions;
- to promote the dissemination of international humanitarian law among six target groups: National Societies, the armed forces, government circles, universities, medical and paramedical personnel, the media;
- to include the dissemination of the principles and ideals of the Movement in every facet of the Movement’s activities.

Although the ICRC, the Federation and the Henry Dunant Institute had primary responsibility for implementing the programmes, the support and the input of the National Societies had proven decisive.

Over the previous fifteen years, dissemination efforts had successfully reached a broad spectrum of the public. But, as Council of Delegates participants stressed, international humanitarian law was all too often flouted or simply unknown. So in its resolution the Council, deeply concerned by the fact that humanitarian law was not universally applied in armed conflicts, urged States fully to discharge their treaty obligations so that international humanitarian law may be known, understood and respected at all times; it further invited the ICRC, in cooperation with the Federation, to maintain and if possible increase

its support for dissemination activities and national and regional dissemination programmes.

The *Guidelines for the '90s* were submitted to the Council of Delegates, which adopted them and recommended they be widely circulated. This document outlines the aims of dissemination and explains its content, namely international humanitarian law, the Fundamental Principles, the ideals of the Movement, its work and its history; it mentions those in charge of dissemination and lists the target groups, in particular the armed forces and other authorities responsible for applying international humanitarian law, the leadership, staff and volunteers of National Societies, young people and members of the teaching profession. The *Guidelines* also provide some simple advice as to methods of dissemination and the way in which the humanitarian message should be conveyed.

6. The Movement and refugees

Since the founding of the Red Cross, the plight of refugees and displaced persons has always been among its humanitarian concerns. However, it was the 24th International Conference in Manila (1981) that for the first time clearly defined the role of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement with regard to refugees, displaced persons and returnees. Since then, the Movement's work in this sphere has been regularly reviewed by the International Conference.

The report submitted to the Council of Delegates by the ICRC and the Federation first mentions the humanitarian role played by the Movement, in accordance with the provisions of humanitarian law, and the respective mandates of the ICRC and the Federation together with that of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, then goes on to describe the main activities undertaken by the Red Cross and Red Crescent for refugees, asylum-seekers, displaced persons and returnees since the last International Conference in 1986.

The report finally expresses the Movement's concern in the face of new situations: lengthy exile of refugees and displaced persons, collapse of social and political structures in a good many countries, increasing numbers of persons displaced within their own countries as a result of armed conflict, violations of human rights, and also starvation used as a method of warfare.

Delegates considered that the Movement should mobilize to find urgently needed responses to the problems caused by these mass refugee movements, and to help the most vulnerable among the victims.

The Council of Delegates adopted a resolution calling upon the components of the Movement to act vigorously in favour of refugees, asylum-seekers, displaced persons and returnees; and to focus attention on the psychological problems encountered by most refugees, asylum-seekers, displaced persons and returnees, and on the care needed for the most vulnerable among them, giving due support to children through activities such as community-based health services and assistance in psychological and social readjustment.

Components of the Movement are also invited actively to seek governments' support in order:

- to permit the Movement to assist those who are deprived of any suitable protection or assistance;
- to address first and foremost the causes of people fleeing their homes, and to promote peace and respect for human rights;
- to ensure that, in all circumstances, refugees, asylum-seekers and displaced persons receive humane treatment and decent material conditions;
- in the search for durable solutions, to see that the voluntary character of repatriation and the safety of returning refugees in their countries of origin are fully ensured;
- to support the development of refugees hosting areas in the event of mass influxes of refugees;
- to ensure that a decision to deny asylum is taken only within the framework of fair and proper procedures and that the principle of return in safety and dignity of rejected asylum-seekers is reaffirmed.

The resolution also emphasizes the need to strengthen cooperation with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees; to draw the attention of host communities to the problems of humanitarian concern encountered by refugees; and to fight xenophobia and racial discrimination.

7. Women in Red Cross/Red Crescent Development

Referring to the Plan of Action on Women in Red Cross/Red Crescent Development, the Council of Delegates called upon the National Societies and the Federation to pay greater attention to the position of women in Red Cross/Red Crescent development programmes. It expressed concern about the vulnerability of women and children, stressing that the hard life they endure in the countryside and urban slums, together with the continued use of traditional practices which endanger the lives of women, is not only a question of basic injustice but also an impediment to economic and social development.

In its resolution on women in Red Cross/Red Crescent development, the Council urged the National Societies to ensure that literacy and other training schemes for women are linked to their daily concerns; to put emphasis on community-based health care, including child spacing, family planning, and clean water supply, in order to meet some of the most urgent needs of women and children; to promote income-generating activities for women; and to take account of the role of women in disaster situations.

8. International humanitarian law

a) Protection of the civilian population against famine, and humanitarian assistance in situations of armed conflict

For some years now, ensuring that the civilian population has adequate supplies in situations of armed conflict has become one of the major problems in the implementation of international humanitarian law.

So as to explore solutions, the ICRC submitted two reports to the Council of Delegates. The first focuses on the causes of famine in wartime, and the other discusses the problems involved in getting the supplies through.

During a seminar entitled "Famine and War" held in Annecy, France, in March 1991, experts in humanitarian aid demonstrated the links between failure of parties to a conflict to observe international humanitarian law, particularly with regard to the protection of civilians against the effects of hostilities, the disruption that such violations cause in access to food supplies, the subsequent impoverishment of the civilian population, the emergence of situations where humanitarian

relief becomes essential for survival and, only too often, the obstacles placed in the way of such relief operations.

Famine, with all the inroads it makes upon health and dignity, is intolerable according to the letter and the spirit of international humanitarian law. The disruption and collapse of the social and economic order create risks of famine that cannot be staved off solely by observance of international humanitarian law. Hence, humanitarian assistance must be provided. Assistance for victims of armed conflict, international or internal, obviously has to reach those for whom it is intended; it must be impartial and be provided without discrimination; it must also be regulated in a manner appropriate to the victims' needs.

The legal provisions that give rise to the right to humanitarian assistance take due account of the prerequisites and the constraints to which such assistance is subject in times of armed conflict. These constraints are not only of a political nature. The realities of war include blockade and siege, control by the armed forces over populations cut off from the outside world, the destruction of means of communication, insufficient energy supplies, in sum, a whole range of highly practical difficulties which humanitarian assistance operations can overcome only through greatly increased efficiency.

Impartiality, non-discrimination, supervision and efficiency are the key words for humanitarian assistance operations conducted in conformity with international humanitarian law and designed to meet its general aims. However, the support of the international community is essential, as is cooperation with National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies. There is in any event a need for consultation and harmonization of activities between the ICRC and intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations which pursue similar aims.

The Council of Delegates adopted two resolutions on this topic. The first, relating to humanitarian assistance in situations of armed conflict, calls upon parties to such conflicts to respect and ensure respect for the rules of international humanitarian law; to allow free passage of supplies essential to the survival of the civilian population, and to agree to cooperate in relief actions which are exclusively humanitarian, impartial and non-discriminatory in character, within the meaning of the Fundamental Principles of the Movement.

The second, concerning the protection of the civilian population against famine in situations of armed conflict, reminds the States of their treaty obligations towards the civilian population in periods of armed conflicts, in particular the obligation to avert or limit famine;

and urges the parties to armed conflicts to maintain conditions enabling civilians to provide for their own needs.

b) Child soldiers

In many armed conflicts, children continue to take part in hostilities despite the existence of international treaties such as the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, and the special provisions of humanitarian law.

The Council of Delegates adopted a resolution designed to ensure better protection for children in wartime, appealing to States and other parties to armed conflicts to observe the rules of international humanitarian law in this regard, and inviting them to strengthen the protection of children in armed conflicts through unilateral declarations or bilateral or regional instruments setting at eighteen the minimum age for participation in hostilities.

Furthermore, the resolution invites the National Societies to do everything possible to protect children during armed conflicts, particularly by ensuring that their basic needs are met and by organizing peaceable and educational activities for them. The Council requested the Henry Dunant Institute to undertake a study, subject to financing, on the recruitment and participation of children as soldiers in armed conflicts and on measures to reduce and eventually eliminate such recruitment and participation.

c) Information about work on the development of international humanitarian law

Mr. Yves Sandoz, speaking on behalf of the ICRC, gave a brief overview of the work under way on the development and implementation of international humanitarian law, a priority area which should have been discussed by Commission I at the 26th International Conference.

On the subject of the effects of weapons, Mr. Sandoz expressed regret that the United Nations Convention on certain conventional weapons was little known and, above all, seldom observed: mines killed or maimed thousands of civilians in current conflicts every year.

Technological advances had led to the development of appalling means of warfare and constant vigilance was vital: the ICRC's attention had been drawn in particular to the possibility that weapons might be produced that would leave soldiers permanently blind. Mr. Sandoz said that the ICRC had completed a round of talks with international experts so as to be able to go to the international community with a

clear and comprehensive definition of the problem and appeal for preventive action.

Turning to the mechanisms for monitoring the implementation of international law, he mentioned the recent establishment of the International Fact-Finding Commission (Article 90 of Protocol I) and asked National Societies to encourage their respective governments to accept its competence.

Mr. Sandoz also mentioned the work undertaken to review the law of war at sea (which has remained almost unchanged since the beginning of the century) and to enhance, using technological standards appropriate to current technology, the protection of medical transportation in times of armed conflict.

In the context of the conduct of hostilities in non-international armed conflicts, Mr. Sandoz said that it was "unacceptable for States to authorize the use, against their own population, of methods whose use they prohibit against foreign soldiers".

Another subject requiring due reflection was the impact of war on the environment. The recent Gulf War had again highlighted the devastating effects on the natural environment of certain means and methods of warfare. There was therefore a pressing need to review the scope of the rules of humanitarian law in this regard and to find ways of ensuring better implementation of the rules, or perhaps to develop them. The ICRC intended to convene a meeting of experts on this topic in 1992.

Mr. Sandoz concluded by appealing to all National Societies to encourage their governments to comply more closely with international humanitarian law and to facilitate the work of the ICRC; he thanked them for their support during the proceedings in Budapest.

After a lively debate, the Council of Delegates unanimously adopted a resolution expressing the Movement's concern about the postponement of the 26th International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent and stating that as a result the development of international humanitarian law, to which the Movement makes an essential contribution, has been set back. The resolution "requests governments and other political entities to make sure that their future relations with Red Cross and Red Crescent bodies do not jeopardize the latter's compliance with the principles of impartiality and neutrality, with a view to enabling the 26th International Conference to meet as soon as possible in order to advance and develop international humanitarian law".

9. Coordination and conduct of emergency relief operations

The Council of Delegates considered developments in humanitarian assistance in the event of natural disasters, the attendant problems of coordination and preventive measures, and what all this meant for the Movement, particularly the National Societies. As *Mr. Pär Stenbäck*, Secretary General of the Federation, pointed out, any major natural disaster immediately assumed an international dimension. Media coverage and the interest aroused in the public translated into an appreciable increase in funds, but also prompted action by many agencies of varying levels of competence, with all the attendant risks of confusion and duplication of effort.

The Council of Delegates first adopted a resolution on the coordination of non-governmental disaster relief in time of peace, recommending among other things that the National Societies, in cooperation with the Federation, take steps to facilitate the coordination of NGO efforts in disaster relief or to assist other appropriate national NGOs in so doing. The Federation was urged to assist the National Societies in fulfilling this role, particularly with regard to pre-disaster preparedness, assessment of damage and needs, and the formation of relief action plans.

In another resolution, the Council of Delegates called upon governments and multilateral bodies to re-examine their existing arrangements for delivering relief with a view to making these structures function effectively rather than creating new, possibly short-lived, fractionated arrangements; it appealed to governments to demonstrate a clear commitment to funding and carrying out disaster preparedness programmes aimed at reducing people's vulnerability to disasters and increasing agencies' ability to respond to disasters.

The Federation for its part was called upon to continue to increase its competence in disaster response, thus increasing its viability as an operational partner for major government and multilateral donor institutions while maintaining its independence.

In a third resolution, on humanitarian assistance in situations of natural and technological disasters, the Council asked the Federation, in consultation with the main relief organizations, to set up a group of experts to study the possibility of elaborating a Code of Conduct on humanitarian aid in such situations.

10. Henry Dunant Institute

The Council took note of the report on the work of the Henry Dunant Institute introduced by its President, *Mr. Hubert Bucher*, Secretary General of the Swiss Red Cross.

Several National Societies expressed support for the Institute and the activities it proposed to carry out in four areas over the next few years: development of the Movement, human rights and protection of the individual, armed conflicts and violence, protection of disaster victims.

11. Financing of the ICRC

The Council of Delegates, after taking note of the report of the Commission for the Financing of the ICRC, welcomed the increase in the number of staff seconded by National Societies to take part in the ICRC's field operations, and the rise in the overall amount of contributions made by National Societies and governments to the ICRC's field budgets.

It decided in a resolution to renew the mandate of the Commission for four years. It appointed as new members the National Societies of the following countries: Australia, Costa Rica, Finland, Libya and Sierra Leone; and renewed the mandate of those of the following countries: Algeria, China, Colombia, France, Germany, Japan and Mauritania. It also set as the Commission's objective to increase by 10% at least the number of National Societies that contribute to the ICRC budgets.

12. National Society Statutes

Since 1986, the Joint ICRC/Federation Commission on National Society Statutes has examined cases concerning 64 National Societies. Of these, 25 cases arose from emerging National Societies, 29 related to amendments of Statutes and 10 to National Societies in difficulties of one kind or another.

The Council of Delegates approved the report of the Commission, stressed the need for the Federation and the ICRC to have the current statutes of all National Societies on file and called on govern-

ments to respect at all times the commitment of the Movement's components to observe the Fundamental Principles.

13. Empress Shôken Fund

The Council took cognizance of the report of the Joint Commission of the Empress Shôken Fund; it adopted a resolution approving a proposed amendment to the rules whereby: "a sum which shall not exceed twelve per cent of the annual interest on the capital shall be set aside to cover the cost of administering the Fund and of assisting National Societies concerned in the realization of their projects". The resolution invites the ICRC and the Federation to submit this amendment to the States party to the Geneva Conventions.

14. Florence Nightingale Medal

The Council of Delegates took note of the ICRC report; it approved an amendment to the Regulations of the Florence Nightingale Medal, the highest international decoration that can be received by a nurse, whereby male nurses also became eligible. The Medal can henceforth be awarded to any person who has, among other things, distinguished him or herself in time of peace or war by showing exceptional courage and devotion to wounded, sick or disabled, or to civilian victims of an armed conflict or disaster. The ICRC was invited to submit this amendment to the States party to the Geneva Conventions.

15. Conflict in Yugoslavia; an appeal for "peace in people's hearts"

The Council of Delegates considered the serious consequences in humanitarian terms of the current conflict in Yugoslavia.

The Red Cross of Yugoslavia painted a tragic picture of the situation in the country and described the action taken to help victims of the conflict by the National Society, the Red Cross in the various Republics and the ICRC.

The President of the ICRC, after mentioning the meetings convened under ICRC auspices in Geneva with the country's political leaders and Red Cross Presidents, read out a statement affirming the commitment of Red Cross members and volunteers in the country to conduct their relief activities for conflict victims in full conformity with the Movement's Fundamental Principles. He also recalled the solemn undertaking made at the Hague Conference on 5 November 1991 by the Presidents of the six Republics to comply with the rules of international humanitarian law providing for the protection of non-combatants and persons *hors de combat*, (civilians, prisoners, the wounded) and to respect the Red Cross emblem and all those engaged in humanitarian work.¹

The Council of Delegates expressed its support for Red Cross action to help victims in that country by adopting a resolution of solidarity which had been put forward by the French and Italian Red Cross Societies and was entitled "Budapest Appeal: peace in people's hearts". Expressing the Movement's profound concern about the fratricidal battles going on just a few hundred kilometres from Budapest, the Council of Delegates assured the Red Cross of Yugoslavia and the Red Cross in the country's six Republics of its support and considered that "once the fighting is over, there must be peace in people's hearts before lasting solidarity and peaceful coexistence can be achieved".

* * *

The Council of Delegates meetings ended on 30 November 1991. The President of the ICRC and the Secretary General of the Federation felt that the hallmark of this very special session of the Council had been one of dignity. Both institutions congratulated the Hungarian Red Cross warmly for organizing the meetings and expressed special thanks to *Mr. Rezso Sztuchlik* who, in his capacity as Chairman of the Council of Delegates, had conducted the meetings with competence and spirit.

The next Council of Delegates meeting will be held in the United Kingdom in October 1993.

¹ See "Humanitarian meetings on conflict in Yugoslavia", *IRRC*, No. 285, November-December 1991, pp. 610-611.

Resolutions of the Council of Delegates

*(adopted at its session of 28-30 November 1991,
in Budapest)*

1

Study Group on the future of the Movement

The Council of Delegates,
taking into account dramatic changes which have created a new world environment,

aware of the problems relating to the application of humanitarian law as encountered in recent armed conflicts,

realizing the increasing pressures on the respective components of the Movement to provide protection and assistance to victims of armed conflicts, strife and disasters,

noting the growing number of participants in the field of international humanitarian assistance and the problems associated with the coordination of disaster relief operations,

recognizing that the Movement must adapt itself to these changing world realities while maintaining and operating in accordance with the Fundamental Principles,

1. *decides* in accordance with Article 14, paragraph 7, of the Statutes of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement to establish a Study Group on the future of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement;
2. *defines* the terms of reference of such a Study Group as follows:

I. Role

The Study Group's role is to advise on and recommend to the Council of Delegates a strategy for the Movement in response to emerging trends and evolving humanitarian issues.

II. Duties and responsibilities

The responsibilities of the Study Group shall be:

1. To review, study, research and discuss current and future trends and issues in the humanitarian field with a view to achieving common positions on matters of concern to all components of the Movement.
2. To study governing and operating structures of the Movement and to suggest appropriate courses of action which will enable the Movement to carry out its humanitarian mandate with the utmost effectiveness and cohesion.

III. Composition

The Study Group shall be composed of five members from National Societies appointed in their personal capacity by the President of the Federation, two members from the Federation and two members from the ICRC.

IV. Working methods

The work of the Study Group shall be supported by a Secretariat. The Study Group shall submit for approval by the Federation and the ICRC the type of Secretariat and the budget it will require for its activities.

The Study Group shall meet at least twice a year, or as required. Its decisions shall be taken by consensus.

The Study Group may seek advice and expertise within and outside the Movement in formulating its recommendations.

The Study Group shall produce a report to the next Council of Delegates.

Furthermore, the Study Group shall report to the Federation's Executive Council and the Assembly of the ICRC every six months in order for these two bodies to take appropriate action within the process of Yverdon (Switzerland).

2

Appeal to the governments

The Council of Delegates,

expressing the views of the components of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement meeting in Budapest,

concerned by the Movement's inability to hold the 26th International Conference, which was to have brought together the Movement's various components and the governments of States party to the Geneva Conventions,

considering that, as a result, the development of international humanitarian law, to which the Movement makes an essential contribution, has been set back,

aware that this state of affairs was brought about by the introduction of political issues and concerns that do not come within its purview and which are foreign to the ideals, principles and activities of the Movement,

anxious to maintain the independence of National Societies and other components of the Movement by not involving them in issues which are not within their competence,

pointing out that whereas neutrality enables States to abstain, it allows the Red Cross and Red Crescent to act,

requests governments and other political entities to make sure that their future relations with Red Cross and Red Crescent bodies do not jeopardize the latter's compliance with the principles of impartiality and neutrality, with a view to enabling the 26th International Conference to meet as soon as possible in order to advance and develop international humanitarian law.

3

Commission on the Red Cross, Red Crescent and Peace

Role, tasks, working methods, composition

The Council of Delegates,

having taken note of the report of the Commission on the Red Cross, Red Crescent and Peace and its annexes, which describe the Commission's activities since the 1989 meeting of the Council of Delegates in Geneva,

wishing to discharge its mandate under the Statutes of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement to give an opinion or, where necessary, take decisions on all matters concerning the Movement which may be referred to it by the International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent, the Standing Commission of the Red Cross and Red Crescent, the National Societies, the International Committee of the Red Cross or the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies,

1. *decides* to maintain the Commission on the Red Cross, Red Crescent and Peace as a subsidiary body within the meaning of Article 14, paragraph 7, of the Movement's Statutes;
2. *defines* its terms of reference as follows:

I. Role

The Commission's role is to promote the implementation, by all the components of the Movement, of the Programme of Action of the Red Cross and Red Crescent as a factor of peace and the Fundamental Guidelines for the contribution of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement to true peace in

the world. According to this mandate, the Commission contributes to the Movement's efforts to achieve lasting peace, which the latter understands as a dynamic process of cooperation among all States and peoples, founded on respect for freedom, independence, national sovereignty, equality and human rights, and on a fair and equitable distribution of resources to meet the needs of peoples. The Movement contributes to this process by its humanitarian work and the dissemination of its ideals.

II. Tasks

The tasks of the Commission shall be the following:

- a) to follow up on the recommendations of the Council of Delegates and carry out preparatory work for the Council in the following specific areas:
 - dissemination and promotion of respect for international humanitarian law and the principles and ideals of the Movement;
 - the Movement's role in promoting respect for human rights and the rights of refugees and minorities, and in situations not covered by international humanitarian law;
 - humanitarian mobilization for the respect of the fundamental rights of the individual, particularly as regards the prohibition of torture, discrimination, summary executions and hostage-taking, and for the respect of the specific rights of women and children;
 - specific Red Cross and Red Crescent action to foster greater understanding between different cultures, ethnic, social and cultural groups;
- b) to fulfil any other task assigned to it by the Council of Delegates which falls within the Commission's mandate. The Commission may submit proposals to the Council of Delegates on studies to be undertaken.

III. Working methods

The Commission may ask one or more of its members to conduct special studies on its behalf. Likewise National Societies which are not members of the Commission may be invited to contribute to such studies. The Commission may also ask for contributions from experts outside the Movement and may hear them during its meetings.

As a rule, the Commission shall meet twice a year, normally on the occasion of statutory meetings. Its decisions shall be taken by consensus.

The Commission shall report to the Council of Delegates.

IV. Composition

The Commission shall be composed of sixteen National Societies and, as permanent members, the Federation, the ICRC and the Henry Dunant Institute.

The National Societies shall be elected for four-year terms in accordance with Article 14, paragraph 7, of the Movement's Statutes.

National Societies shall be selected with due regard to fair geographical distribution.

The Council of Delegates elects the Commission's Chairman.

The Commission shall appoint a Vice-Chairman.

4

Commission on the Red Cross, Red Crescent and Peace

Membership and Chairman

I. Membership

In addition to the permanent members, that is, the Federation, the ICRC and the Henry Dunant Institute,

the Council of Delegates,

having regard to the interest expressed by individual National Societies and to the principle of fair geographical representation and the need for a mixture of experienced and new members of the Commission,

elects the following 16 National Societies as members:

Australian Red Cross

Brazilian Red Cross

Colombian Red Cross

Egyptian Red Crescent

Ethiopian Red Cross

French Red Cross

Hellenic Red Cross

Hungarian Red Cross

The Republic of Korea Red Cross

Red Cross of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea

Malaysian Red Crescent

Nigerian Red Cross

Paraguayan Red Cross

Sudanese Red Crescent

Swedish Red Cross

Tunisian Red Crescent

In order to ensure the continued injection of new contributions, the Council of Delegates *approves* a rotational system whereby every two years four long-standing members would be replaced by four new National Societies (at least one from each region).

II. Chairman

The Council of Delegates *elects*

Mr. Maurice Aubert as the Chairman of the Commission on the Red Cross, Red Crescent and Peace.

5

Use of the emblem by National Societies

The Council of Delegates,

aware that respect for the emblem of the red cross or the red crescent is of vital importance for the protection of the victims of armed conflict and those who care for them,

convinced that clear and widespread knowledge of the uses authorized under the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949 is a prerequisite for respect for the emblem,

recalling that the First Geneva Convention places an obligation on States to take the necessary measures to prevent and suppress misuse of the emblem at all times,

recalling that the 24th International Conference of the Red Cross (Manila, 1981) requested the ICRC to prepare a draft revision of the *Regulations on the use of the emblem of the red cross, red crescent and red lion and sun by National Societies* (Resolution XII),

recalling Resolution 6 of the 1987 Council of Delegates and Resolution 6 of the 1989 Council of Delegates,

noting that the drafts prepared by the ICRC in consultation with the National Societies and the Federation Secretariat have been examined in detail within the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement,

aware of the need to have, as soon as possible, Regulations replacing the 1965 Regulations,

1. *adopts* the *Regulations on the use of the emblem of the red cross or the red crescent by the National Societies*, contained in the report on the subject submitted by the International Committee of the Red Cross;

2. *invites* the ICRC to submit these Regulations and this Resolution to the States party to the Geneva Conventions, encouraging them to endorse the Regulations and, where necessary, to authorize their National Societies to observe them;
3. *recommends* that National Societies, in the light of the deferment of the 26th International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent, comply with the new Regulations, in accordance with national legislation, at the earliest possible date;
4. *invites* National Societies to assist their governments in meeting their obligations under the Geneva Conventions with regard to the emblem, in particular to prevent its misuse, and to support the activities of the ICRC in that respect;
5. *invites* the ICRC, in cooperation with the Federation, to examine any questions submitted to it with regard to compliance with and interpretation of the Regulations on the use of the emblem and to report to the next Council of Delegates.

6

Information policy of the Movement

The Council of Delegates,

having taken note of the ICRC/Federation report on implementation of the Information Policy of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, submitted to it pursuant to the request by the 1989 Council of Delegates (Resolution 4),

1. *notes* with satisfaction that the main objectives set for the ICRC, the Federation and the National Societies as regards global communication have been achieved:
 - the *Communicator's Guide*, intended to assist implementation of the Movement's Identity Programme,
 - the regional training seminar for information officers of English-speaking National Societies in East Africa, held in Kenya, to introduce the Communicator's Guide as a permanent working tool,
 - development of *Red Cross/Red Crescent* as the Movement's magazine;
2. *decides*, with regard to World Red Cross and Red Crescent Day:
 - to choose, for the three-year period from 1993 to 1995, the overall theme of "dignity for all",
 - under this overall theme, to focus on three annual sub-themes to be adapted as appropriate by National Societies:
 - 1993: "the vulnerable"
 - 1994: "our children's future"
 - 1995: "respect for women"

3. *supports* the ICRC and the Federation in their intention to find the resources necessary to continue publishing *Red Cross/Red Crescent*, and *invites* National Societies to demonstrate their interest in the Movement's magazine in a more tangible way, especially as regards its financing and distribution;
4. *encourages* the Movement's communication experts to strengthen existing professional links in order to improve the Movement's performance in terms of public information;
5. *takes note* of the continuation of a professional group of communication experts from the ICRC, the Federation and the National Societies, such as the Public Support Group, sufficiently flexible in composition to handle the various information programmes regularly carried out within the Movement;
6. *invites* the ICRC and the Federation to continue harmonizing their efforts in everything relating to the conduct of information programmes of interest to the Movement, both regionally and internationally, so as to highlight more effectively the humanitarian work being carried out throughout the world.

7

Respect for and dissemination of the Fundamental Principles

The Council of Delegates,

convinced that respect for the Fundamental Principles by all the components of the Movement and dissemination of knowledge of those Principles among the National Societies and the general public are of vital importance,

concerned by violations of the Principles, resulting either from lack of understanding of their purpose and meaning, or from outside pressure on National Societies,

noting that National Societies often find themselves unable to cope with such situations,

noting with satisfaction the activities undertaken by the ICRC and the Federation to make the Principles more widely known, and in particular the adoption of their dissemination policy,

1. *takes note* of the ICRC's second interim report relative to the study on respect for and dissemination of the Fundamental Principles, drawn up in cooperation with the Federation;

2. *expresses* its appreciation of the contribution by National Societies which took part in the consultation arranged by the ICRC;
3. *encourages* the ICRC, in cooperation with the Federation, to continue the consultation by holding extensive talks with National Society officials, organizing regional or international seminars on the subject, or by any other means it deems appropriate;
4. *asks* the ICRC, in cooperation with the Federation, to support the National Societies' efforts in implementing the Principles and to help them in particular to counter any pressure to which they may be subjected;
5. *requests* the ICRC, in cooperation with the Federation, to continue the on-going study with a view to setting out, in an updated commentary, the Movement's common interpretation of the Principles;
6. *invites* the ICRC, in cooperation with the Federation, to report to the next Council of Delegates.

8

Dissemination of international humanitarian law and of the principles and ideals of the Movement

The Council of Delegates,

having taken note of the joint ICRC/Federation report on the many dissemination activities carried out since 1977 by the National Societies, the ICRC, the Federation and the Henry Dunant Institute, and on the implementation of the recommendations contained in Resolution IV of the 25th Conference,

stressing once again that responsibility for the dissemination and teaching of international humanitarian law lies mainly with the States, by virtue of the obligations set out in the four Geneva Conventions of 1949 and their two Additional Protocols of 1977,

deploring the fact that there are still too many violations of international humanitarian law,

recalling that the dissemination of international humanitarian law and of the principles and ideals of the Red Cross and Red Crescent is one of the Movement's permanent activities and aims to:

- limit the suffering caused by armed conflicts and other situations of violence,
- make certain that humanitarian work may proceed safely, by ensuring that the emblems of the red cross and red crescent are respected,
- strengthen the image of the Movement, and
- contribute to promoting a spirit of peace,

1. *adopts* the *Guidelines for the '90s* and *recommends* that they be circulated as widely as possible;
2. *urges* the States fully to discharge their treaty obligations so that international humanitarian law may be known, understood and respected at all times;
3. *reiterates* the recommendation that National Societies appoint and train dissemination experts, and cooperate with their countries's authorities, particularly within the framework of joint dissemination committees;
4. *invites* the ICRC, in cooperation with the Federation, to maintain and if possible increase its support for dissemination activities and national and regional dissemination programmes.

9

The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and refugees

The Council of Delegates,
recalling Resolution XXI of the 24th International Conference of the Red Cross, the accompanying statement of policy on Red Cross aid to refugees and Resolution XVII of the 25th International Conference on the Movement and refugees,

concerned that the number of refugees, asylum-seekers and persons displaced within their own countries has continued to grow steadily,

aware that many long-standing refugee situations are still awaiting solutions, and that continued dependence by large numbers of refugees on the support and protection of host countries may progressively increase their vulnerability,

recognizing that a large number of these persons suffer from psychological problems and that the most vulnerable, in particular refugee children, may be exposed to high risks and severe deprivation having a lasting effect on their lives,

taking note that violations of human rights, armed conflict and violations of international humanitarian law are amongst the main causes of population movements,

noting with concern that the majority of refugees find asylum in low-income countries in which they share scarce resources with the local population, thereby aggravating conditions of poverty and instability,

recalling the primary function of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees to ensure international protection and material assistance to refugees, persons displaced outside their countries of origin and returnees, and to seek durable solutions,

recognizing that new forms of movements of persons, due principally to economic and social hardship, frequently leading to severe malnutrition and famine conditions, and often associated with political instability, have emerged, and that these persons, while not fulfilling the international criteria for refugee status, are in need of humanitarian support,

noting the tasks carried out by the various components of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement on behalf of refugees, asylum-seekers, displaced persons and returnees, and the efforts made to provide information and training within the Movement in order to keep pace with these growing tasks,

requests the various components of the Movement, in accordance with their respective mandates:

- a) to act vigorously in favour of refugees, asylum-seekers, displaced persons and returnees,
- b) to pursue their efforts in disseminating international humanitarian law, human rights law, of which refugee law is part, and the Fundamental Principles of the Movement in order to enhance protection and humane treatment of refugees, asylum-seekers, displaced persons and returnees,
- c) to cooperate actively in supporting activities designed to enhance refugees' self-reliance in camps and on their safe return to their home countries,
- d) to focus attention on the psychological problems encountered by most refugees, asylum-seekers, displaced persons and returnees and on the care needed for the most vulnerable among them, giving due support to children through activities such as community-based health services and assistance in psychological and social readjustment,
- e) to enhance training and information, including exchanges of experiences, of its members and representatives in this field,
- f) to draw the attention of host communities to the problems of humanitarian concern encountered by refugees, asylum-seekers and displaced persons, and to fight xenophobia and racial discrimination,
- g) to continue and further strengthen cooperation with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and other international organizations acting in favour of refugees, asylum-seekers, displaced persons and returnees,
- h) to actively seek the support of governments with a view:
 - i) to permit the Movement to assist those who are deprived of any suitable protection or assistance,
 - ii) to address first and foremost the causes of people fleeing their homes, and to promote peace and respect for human rights and to intensify cooperation in socio-economic development, particularly among low-income countries,

- iii) to ensure that, in all circumstances, refugees, asylum-seekers and displaced persons receive humane treatment and decent material conditions,
- iv) in the search for durable solutions, to see that the voluntary character of repatriation and the safety of returning refugees in their countries of origin are fully ensured,
- v) to support the development of refugee hosting areas in the event of mass influxes of refugees, so as to avert any deterioration in living conditions and ensure the security of the refugee and local population,
- vi) to ensure that a decision to deny asylum is taken only within the framework of fair and proper procedures and that the principle of return in safety and dignity of rejected asylum-seekers is reaffirmed and, if assistance is given by National Societies, to respect their adherence to the Fundamental Principles of the Movement.

10

Women in Red Cross/Red Crescent development

The Council of Delegates,

recalling Decision 33 of the VIIth Session of the League General Assembly in 1989, and the endorsement of the Plan of Action on Women in Red Cross/Red Crescent Development,

increasingly concerned about the vulnerability of women and children in situations of deprivation, including disasters,

aware of the often weak economic, social and legal position of women, aggravated by the current adverse socio-economic conditions,

concerned about the continued use of harmful traditional practices threatening the lives of women,

recognizing that the hard life endured by women in the countryside and urban slums is not only a question of basic injustice, but also an impediment to economic and social development,

urges all National Society and Federation representatives responsible for the implementation of development programmes to:

- recognize women as a major beneficiary group for Red Cross/Red Crescent development programmes,
- ensure that the role of women in situations of disaster is being taken into account adequately,
- ensure that literacy and other training schemes for women are linked to their daily concerns and aimed at improving their lives,

- put emphasis on community-based primary health care, including child spacing, family planning and clean water supply, in order to meet some of the most urgent needs of women and children,
- review the ongoing health activities, particularly first-aid training, to ensure that they cater to the needs of the most vulnerable,
- promote income-generating activities for women, and ensure that such projects are economically viable and become independent of subsidies from the National Societies,
- embark upon labour-saving development projects for women, giving high priority to water and fuel supply, child care, agriculture and food processing.

11

Protection of victims of war

The Council of Delegates,

having taken note of the report on the World Campaign for the Protection of Victims of War,

realizing the importance of making the general public and governments aware of the tragic plight of war victims, in particular the ever-increasing number of civilian victims, and of reminding the parties to armed conflicts of their obligation to respect international humanitarian law,

1. *appreciates* the worldwide effort made in carrying out the World Campaign for the Protection of Victims of War;
2. *expresses* the wish that the components of the Movement continue their efforts in behalf of war victims at the national and regional levels;
3. *encourages* governments and the ICRC, in cooperation with the Federation and the National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, to take advantage of the impetus given by this campaign to intensify efforts to promote better understanding and knowledge of the situation of war victims and of international humanitarian law;
4. *appeals* to the States and all belligerents to respect international humanitarian law;
5. *calls on* all the parties involved in armed conflicts to establish without delay conditions conducive to dialogue in order to put an end to violence and ongoing hostilities.

Humanitarian assistance in situations of armed conflict

The Council of Delegates,

deeply concerned by the suffering of civilian victims of international and non-international armed conflicts and by the scale of ensuing needs,

recalling that the principle of humanity and the rules of international humanitarian law recognize the victims' right to receive protection and assistance in all circumstances,

recalling also that States affected by an armed conflict have the primary responsibility for assisting victims,

stressing that a relief action which is neutral, humanitarian and impartial in character does not constitute interference in the internal affairs of States,

pointing out that respect for the rules of international humanitarian law, in particular those protecting the civilian population against the effects of hostilities, contributes to alleviate the need for food and medical relief,

noting that the destruction of existing infrastructures and the existence of zones of military operations put specific constraints on the transport and distribution of humanitarian aid during armed conflict,

stressing the urgency of the needs and the necessity of gaining access rapidly to the victims in the areas affected by armed conflict,

urges therefore all the parties to an armed conflict and, where applicable, any High Contracting Party:

- a) to respect and ensure respect for the rules of international humanitarian law protecting the civilian population against the effects of hostilities and, in particular, those that prohibit the use of starvation of civilians as a method of combat;
- b) to allow free passage of medicines and medical equipment, foodstuffs, clothing and other supplies essential to the survival of the civilian population of another Contracting Party, even if the latter is its adversary, it being understood that they are entitled to ensure that the consignments are not diverted from their destination;
- c) to agree to and cooperate in relief actions which are exclusively humanitarian, impartial and non-discriminatory in character, within the meaning of the Fundamental Principles of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement;

urges the States to support the work of the ICRC and other humanitarian organizations that are in a position to conduct humanitarian assistance operations for victims of armed conflict in a neutral and impartial manner;

invites the ICRC to pursue its efforts to ensure that the rules of international humanitarian law protecting civilians are implemented, in particular the latter's right to receive supplies essential to their survival, in cooperation with

National Societies and in conjunction with all intergovernmental agencies and non-governmental organizations concerned.

13

Protection of the civilian population against famine in situations of armed conflict

The Council of Delegates,

having taken note with interest of the report submitted by the ICRC on aid to famine victims during armed conflicts,

deeply concerned by the frequency, extent and duration of famines that have occurred in such situations in recent years,

noting that, in general, the most severe outbreaks of famine are not due to a lack of local natural resources, but to the disruption or deliberate destruction of normal means of production, acquisition and distribution of basic food-stuffs,

noting further that famine tends to become endemic when population movements and the destruction of vital resources are associated with military operations,

stressing that respect for the rules of international humanitarian law, as codified or expanded in Articles 23 and 59 to 61 of the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949, and Articles 54 and 70 of Additional Protocol I, and Articles 14, 17 and 18 of Additional Protocol II, would in many cases suffice to prevent or reduce the risk of famine as a result of an armed conflict,

1. *reminds* the authorities concerned and the armed forces under their command of their obligation to apply international humanitarian law, in particular the following humanitarian principles:

- the prohibition on starvation of civilians as a method of combat,
- the prohibition on attacking, destroying, removing or rendering useless objects indispensable to the survival of the civilian population,
- the prohibition on displacing civilians unless their security or imperative military reasons so demand and, should such displacements have to be carried out, the stipulation that all possible measures be taken to ensure that the civilians are received under satisfactory conditions of shelter, hygiene, health, safety and nutrition,
- the obligation to allow humanitarian and impartial relief operations for the civilian population when supplies essential for its survival are lacking;

2. *urges* the Parties to armed conflicts to maintain conditions enabling civilians to provide for their needs, in particular by refraining from taking

any measures destined to deprive them of their sources of food or of access to their crops;

3. *invites* governments, with the support of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, to spread knowledge of and ensure respect for the principles and rules of international humanitarian law which, if applied in situations of armed conflict, suffice to avert or limit famine.

14

Child soldiers

The Council of Delegates,

recalling that children suffer particular hardship during armed conflicts and that international humanitarian law in general, and the Geneva Conventions and their Additional Protocols in particular, afford them special attention and protection,

recalling that international humanitarian law, as expressed in Protocol I, Article 77, and Protocol II, Article 4, sets at fifteen the minimum age for the participation of children in hostilities, and stipulates that in recruiting persons between the ages of fifteen and eighteen priority is to be given to those who are oldest,

recalling Resolution IX entitled "Protection of children in armed conflicts" and Resolution XX entitled "Assistance to children in emergency situations" of the 25th International Conference of the Red Cross,

mindful of Article 38 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child concerning children in situations of armed conflict,

welcoming the provision of the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, which requires respect for the rules of international humanitarian law specially protecting children,

having taken note of the report of the Conference on Children of War held in Stockholm from 31 May to 2 June 1991,

deeply concerned that in many areas of the world children continue to take part in hostilities and are recruited into armed forces, and that some governments and armed non-governmental entities encourage and sometimes compel children to take part in hostilities,

deploring the fact that many child soldiers have been killed or seriously injured and that others languish as prisoners of war,

concerned that children in areas affected by armed conflict may be induced to participate in hostilities for lack of alternative means of satisfying their basic needs of food, clothing and shelter,

also concerned that persons under the age of eighteen years may not be sufficiently mature to understand the consequences of their actions, and to comply with international humanitarian law,

recognizing that children who have been caught up in armed conflicts, and particularly those who have participated in hostilities, are often mentally, morally and physically marked for life,

deeming it necessary to take steps to afford children better protection during armed conflicts and to put an end to their participation in hostilities,

1. *appeals* to all Parties to armed conflicts strictly to observe the rules of international humanitarian law affording special protection to children;
2. *invites* States and other parties to armed conflicts to strengthen the protection of children in armed conflicts through unilateral declarations or bilateral or regional instruments setting at eighteen the minimum age for participation in hostilities;
3. *invites* National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies to do everything possible to protect children during armed conflicts, particularly by ensuring that their basic needs are met and by organizing peaceable and educational activities for them;
4. *requests* the Henry Dunant Institute to undertake a study, subject to financing, on the recruitment and participation of children as soldiers in armed conflicts, and on measures to reduce and eventually eliminate such recruitment and participation;
5. *decides* to re-examine, at the Council of Delegates in 1993, on the basis of the aforementioned study, the situation of children in armed conflicts.

15

Coordination of non-governmental disaster relief in time of peace

The Council of Delegates,

noting with satisfaction the growing governmental and non-governmental humanitarian response to international disaster relief operations,

aware of the responsibility of the recognized relief agencies to promote information, cooperation and coordination in case of international disaster relief operations,

referring to the *Principles and Rules for Red Cross and Red Crescent Disaster Relief* adopted by the 21st International Conference of the Red Cross in Istanbul (1969), amended by the 22nd International Conference in Teheran (1973), by the 23rd International Conference Bucharest (1977), by the 24th International Conference in Manila (1981), and by the 25th International Conference in Geneva (1986),

stressing the function of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies to act as the permanent body of liaison, coordination and information exchange between the National Societies, in accordance with the *Principles and Rules for Red Cross and Red Crescent Disaster Relief*,

recalling Resolution No. VII adopted at the 22nd International Conference in Teheran (1973) requesting the Federation, the ICRC and National Societies to maintain and further strengthen their association with UNDRO with a view to effecting closer cooperation and coordination in the field of relief assistance in cases of disaster, including also other specialized UN agencies,

recognizing the commitment of the Federation to supporting the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction (1990-1999),

recognizing that governments of countries prone to natural disasters are increasingly acknowledging the important roles played by national and international voluntary relief agencies in times of disaster and are further strengthening their mechanisms for effectively utilizing international NGO relief,

recognizing the need for disaster-prone countries to have in place a disaster preparedness plan which includes a policy on the role of international NGOs offering assistance in times of disaster, in order to avoid confusion, duplication and waste of effort which would reduce the effectiveness of assistance to disaster victims,

recognizing that disaster preparedness covers both natural and man-made disasters, including movements of refugees and displaced persons,

taking note of the growing number of NGOs involved in disaster relief and the variety of skills they bring to the disaster area, which can be of importance in increasing the benefits accruing to disaster victims, if well coordinated with national relief efforts,

recognizing the well-founded and increasing demands of donor governments and other donor institutions for improved effectiveness in disaster relief through better coordination, and the need to present a coherent picture of international humanitarian action to world public opinion,

1. *appeals* to all governments of disaster-prone countries to take steps, as a disaster preparedness measure, to ensure the establishment of National Disaster Relief Committees to provide overall coordination in times of disaster;
2. *urges* that National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies should be represented on such committees along with other relevant national NGOs;
3. *recommends* that National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, in cooperation with the Federation and abiding by the *Principles and Rules for Red Cross and Red Crescent Disaster Relief*, take steps to facilitate the coordination of NGO efforts in disaster relief or to assist other appropriate national NGOs in so doing;

4. *urges* the Federation to take steps to assist National Societies in fulfilling this role. These should include, *inter alia*:
- pre-disaster preparedness assistance to National Societies to aid them in preparing for a possible coordination role, including the provision of training and communications equipment where appropriate,
 - assistance to National Societies in times of disaster to carry out timely needs assessments and formulate effective relief action plans,
 - the provision of specifically allocated and suitably equipped international personnel, in times of disaster, to assist National Societies in the critical work of gathering, analyzing and sharing information pertinent to the disaster, within the responding NGO community, with a view to providing a common basis of understanding from which cooperation and coordination can grow,
 - assistance to National Societies, in times of disaster, to develop the potential to act as a facilitator between the NGO community and the host government, if so requested.

16

Harnessing international humanitarian assistance for disaster reduction

The Council of Delegates,

notes the growing international awareness of the increasing scale of disasters and the detrimental effect they have on attaining sustainable development targets of disaster-prone countries and communities;

notes the increasing willingness of multinational and national bodies to take action in support of foreign disaster relief;

notes the growing phenomenon of short-lived NGOs created in response to particular disaster events, which on occasion act as channels for donor government funding;

notes in particular the present discussions in, *inter alia*, the UN, EC and the Council of Europe on strengthening their respective disaster relief responses;

notes with regret that in the above discussions the emphasis is placed upon high-profile short-term relief measures with consequential reduction in the resources available for the vital work of disaster preparedness and prevention;

appeals to governments and multilateral bodies to re-examine the existing arrangements for delivering relief with a view to making these structures function effectively rather than creating new, possibly short-lived, fractionated arrangements;

appeals to governments to demonstrate a clear commitment to funding and carrying out disaster preparedness programmes aimed at reducing people's vulnerability to disasters and increasing agencies' ability to respond to disasters;

affirms the willingness and capacity of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies to act in disaster preparedness, relief and rehabilitation across all major disaster-prone countries;

calls upon the Federation to continue to increase its competence in disaster response, thus increasing its viability as an operational partner for major government and multilateral donor institutions while keeping its independence.

17

Humanitarian assistance in situations of natural and technological disasters

The need for a code of conduct

The Council of Delegates,

concerned for the respect for the Fundamental Principles of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, proclaimed by the 20th Conference and revised by the 25th Conference,

aware of the essential role of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement in international humanitarian activities and related codification,

1. *asks* the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, in consultation with the main relief organizations, to set up a group of experts to study the possibility of elaborating a Code of Conduct relative to humanitarian aid in situations of natural and technological disasters;
2. *requests* the Federation, after consultation with the main relief organizations, to report on the outcome of that study to the next Council of Delegates.

18

Financing of the ICRC

The Council of Delegates,

having taken note of the report submitted by the Commission for the Financing of the International Committee of the Red Cross,

having noted that a stable number of National Societies make regular contributions to the ICRC's headquarters budget,

having noted with satisfaction the increase in the number of staff seconded by National Societies to take part in the ICRC's field operations, and the increase in the overall amount of contributions made by National Societies and governments to the ICRC's field budgets,

1. *thanks* National Societies and governments which, by making contributions in cash, kind or services, provide essential support to the ICRC;
2. *thanks* the Commission for the Financing of the ICRC for its work;
3. *decides* to renew the mandate of the Commission for the Financing of the ICRC for four years;
4. *appoints* the National Societies of the following countries to be members of the Commission:
Australia, Costa Rica, Finland, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya and Sierra Leone,
and renews the mandate of National Societies of the following countries:
Algeria, China, Colombia, France, Germany, Japan and Mauritania;
5. *sets* as the objective for the Commission to increase by 10 per cent at least the number of National Societies that contribute to the budgets of the ICRC;
6. *urges* all National Societies to contribute to the activities of the ICRC and to support the ICRC's appeals to their respective governments.

19

Report of the Joint ICRC/Federation Commission on National Society Statutes

The Council of Delegates,

recalling Resolution VI of the 22nd International Conference and Resolution XX of the 24th International Conference,

stressing the importance of the mandate conferred on the Joint ICRC/Federation Commission on National Society Statutes to ensure respect for the Fundamental Principles within the Movement,

approves the report submitted by the Joint ICRC/Federation Commission on National Society Statutes and *invites* the ICRC and the Federation to continue their work in this respect;

requests National Societies to submit the draft texts of their new or amended statutes to the ICRC and the Federation before their final adoption, and to follow up the recommendations made by the Joint Commission;

stresses the need for the Federation and the ICRC to have on file the current statutes of all National Societies which are members of the Movement;

calls on governments to respect at all times the commitment of all the Movement's components to observe the Fundamental Principles.

20

Empress Shôken Fund

The Council of Delegates,
having taken cognizance of the report of the Joint Commission of the Empress Shôken Fund,

1. *thanks* the Joint Commission for its management of the Empress Shôken Fund and *approves* all the provisions made by it;
2. *requests* the Joint Commission to transmit this report to the Imperial Family of Japan through the intermediary of the Japanese Red Cross Society;
3. *approves* the proposed amendment of Article 9 of the Regulations, which now reads as follows:
"A sum which shall not exceed twelve per cent of the annual interest on the capital shall be set aside to cover the cost of administering the Fund and of assisting the National Societies concerned in the realization of their projects";
4. *invites* the ICRC and the Federation to submit this amendment to the States Party to the Geneva Conventions;
5. *decides* that, if within six months of the text being submitted to them, the States raise no objection, the amended Regulations will be deemed to have been definitively adopted.

21

Revision of the Regulations for the Florence Nightingale Medal

The Council of Delegates,
having taken cognizance of the report of the International Committee of the Red Cross,

wishing to preserve the exceptional nature of the award of the Florence Nightingale Medal,

1. *approves* the revised text of Article 2 of the Regulations;
2. *invites* the ICRC to submit this amendment to the States Party to the Geneva Conventions;

3. *decides* that, if within six months of the text being submitted to them, the States raise no objection, the amended Regulations will be deemed to have been definitively adopted.

22

Budapest Appeal: peace in people's hearts

The Council of Delegates,

profoundly concerned by the fratricidal battles a few hundred kilometres south of Budapest,

aware of its responsibility, as the supreme body of the Red Cross and Red Crescent, in fostering harmony and understanding among peoples and fellow men,

having taken note of and deeply moved by the important declaration made by the Red Cross of Yugoslavia, the Red Cross of Bosnia-Herzegovina, the Red Cross of Croatia, the Red Cross of Macedonia, the Red Cross of Montenegro, the Red Cross of Serbia and the Red Cross of Slovenia, and the agreement reached under ICRC auspices in Geneva on 27 November 1991 by the representatives of the various parties on matters of humanitarian concern arising from the conflict,

decides to give its full support to the activities of the Societies having endorsed that declaration;

expresses its determination to pursue the humanitarian work currently being carried out by the Movement;

considers that, once the fighting is over, there must be peace in people's hearts before lasting solidarity and peaceful coexistence can be achieved;

consequently *calls on* all the Authorities and Organizations concerned to act without delay so as to create the conditions for dialogue at all levels of public opinion as the prerequisite for mutual understanding.

23

Place and date of the next Council of Delegates

The Council of Delegates,

decides that its next meeting will be held in 1993 at the same place and on the same date as the General Assembly of the Federation.

VIIIth session of the General Assembly of the League of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

(Budapest, 25-28 November 1991)

The VIIIth session of the General Assembly of the League of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies opened on Monday 25 November 1991 in Budapest, attended by delegations from 110 National Societies.

I. OPENING CEREMONY

In his speech, the President of the League, *Mr. Mario Villarroel Lander*, gave an overview of the League's position and of its activities since the previous General Assembly in 1989. He stressed the need for the Movement to adapt to present-day concerns and to meet tomorrow's challenges in a spirit of unity and in full compliance with the fundamental principles. The adoption in 1989 of the League's Strategic Work Plan for the Nineties was, he said, of key importance in this regard.

The League then described the relief operations undertaken in the previous two years, pointing out that in the first six months of 1991 the League had made 35 separate appeals (a number which equalled those launched in the whole of 1990) for relief operations that had enabled aid to be given to 4.5 million victims of natural disasters in various parts of the world, in addition to activities in favour of refugees and displaced persons during the Gulf War.

Mr. Villarroel was pleased to state that the League's activities worldwide had expanded considerably and that for the first time in over a decade large-scale programmes had been set up in Eastern Europe. Development programmes aimed at strengthening the capacity of National Societies were, he said, also on the increase: in 1991 over 320 development projects had been under way in 72 countries, requiring appeals for 61.5 million Swiss francs.

After reviewing his missions over the past two years to National Societies in various parts of the world, the President of the League called on its members to combine forces so as to meet new challenges in a constantly changing world. He urged them to do more to improve conditions for human beings by developing the National Societies' operational capacity to deal with emergencies and by intensifying preventive and training activities, since "poverty is an affront to human dignity".

After mentioning the possibility of changing the League's name to "International Federation", which would better reflect its purpose and its universal character, Mr. Villarroel paid tribute to the authorities and the people of Hungary, who were hosting the meetings of the Movement's statutory bodies.

The President of the ICRC, *Mr. Cornelio Sommaruga*, in his address, underscored the close cooperation between the League and the International Committee of the Red Cross, particularly in areas of common interest such as National Society development. He also stressed the importance of youth as a factor bringing renewed vigour into the Movement: "In today's world, young people are often involved in violence, either as perpetrators or as victims; yet some of them are the most ardent defenders of the fundamental rights of the individual. They represent the hope of new life for the National Societies, in particular for those going through a transitional period due to political upheavals in their countries. This is very necessary: we must not forget the moving message voiced by the youth of the Movement at the end of their Supercamp in Solferino and Geneva in 1989! The ICRC stands ready to help in expanding the role played by young people in the Movement, within the context of its statutory responsibilities".

Finally, the President of the ICRC asked the delegates to continue considering ways to strengthen the unity and effectiveness of Red Cross and the Red Crescent action.

II. PROCEEDINGS OF THE ASSEMBLY

1. New National Societies

The General Assembly admitted the Solomon Islands Red Cross by acclamation as a member of the League. In addition, the National Red Cross Societies of Lithuania and Latvia were readmitted to the League, which henceforth has 150 members.

2. League activities

After his report on the League's work since the previous General Assembly in 1989, the League's Secretary General, *Mr. Pär Stenbäck*, emphasized the need for National Societies to respond to competition in humanitarian assistance by making greater efforts to promote disaster prevention and preparedness and coordinating relief work at national level. He also pointed out that the Strategic Work Plan for the Nineties was "the tool to master the future of the Federation", and that the strengthening of the National Societies' operational capacity remained a priority.

The League Under-Secretary-General for Operations, *Mr. Stephen Davey*, reported on the appeals made since October 1989 for relief operations and development programmes.

3. League strategy for the nineties

The General Assembly debated the new directions indicated in the Strategic Work Plan of the League for the Nineties, which was adopted at the Assembly's VIIth session in 1989. The accent would henceforth be laid on strengthening the operational capacity of structurally weak National Societies and gearing activities more particularly to the most vulnerable communities.

The Assembly consequently adopted a resolution in which, among other things, it "urges all National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies:

- to intensify their efforts to focus programmes and services on the needs of the most vulnerable, as outlined in the Strategic Work Plan of the League for the Nineties, and to cooperate with the League, responding fully to its initiatives in this regard, it being understood that the most vulnerable are those at greatest risk from situations that threaten their survival or their capacity to live with a minimum of social and economic security and human dignity;
- to ensure that adequate resources for the League's implementation of the Work Plan are made available from their own means and, as appropriate, government funds."

4. Finance

The General Assembly approved the League's budget for 1992 and 1993, the total amounts being 25,875,000 and 27,285,000 Swiss francs respectively. It also approved amendments relating to the calculation of the National Societies' scale of contributions.

5. Youth policy and strategy

The Assembly adopted the "Youth Policy and Strategy of the League" submitted by the Youth Commission, with special emphasis on the following policy statements:

Policy Statements

- ***"Young people have a key role to play in the provision of the Movement's services."***

"Young people have contributed over the years as an exceptionally good volunteer force within the Movement. Again and again, they have worked hard in relief operations, emergency services and development programmes."

"They are in an ideal position to identify the needs of young people and others within the community. They develop and carry out programmes, see ways and means of reaching other young people in need. They add credibility to the Movement's work with many groups."

- ***"Young people are an important target group, both in the membership and in the wider community."***

"To succeed in many of its programmes, the Movement needs to work directly with young people. Many health programmes have young people as their main 'clients'. Young people are one group among others and are most threatened by disaster, underdevelopment and war."

- ***"Young people have a role in the leadership and management of the Movement today."***

"When fully involved in decision-making and in leadership, both in their own affairs and throughout the Movement, young people bring not only their experience but also a special creativity and idealism which complements the maturity of other members."

- ***“Young people of today will lead the Movement of tomorrow.”***
“In many National Societies, the leaders of today were the youth members of a generation ago.”
“When young people work side by side with the older members of the Movement in service programmes, emergency actions and the management of the Movement, they rapidly acquire the skills which will enable them to lead the Movement of the future.”
- ***“Young people need support.”***
“Young people can sometimes be marginalized within society because of their social position. If we are to realize their full potential within our Movement, special support in the form of Youth programmes and structures must be put in place.”
“Each of the partners in the process — young people, Youth leaders and representatives, National Societies, the League, its Youth Commission and Secretary General — are urged to ensure that the Policy and Strategy are implemented to the fullest.”

The Assembly requested all those involved in this process to do their utmost to implement the Youth Policy and Strategy.

In addition, the Assembly decided to set up an International Red Cross and Red Crescent Youth Fund intended to increase the involvement of young people in Red Cross and Red Crescent activities.

6. Development

The Assembly adopted the report of the Development Commission, which stressed the need for a clear definition of the idea of development within the Movement and for respect for the “Principles and Rules for Development Cooperation” adopted in October 1990 by the Executive Council, and pointed out that it was essential to have a clear strategy for the implementation of bilateral or multilateral framework development projects, while keeping costs within the limits of available resources. In this connection mention was made of the Development Fund, the purpose of which was to finance projects meeting the criteria of the Principles and Rules.

During the subsequent debate, it was emphasized that framework development projects should include disaster-prevention programmes and should extend to areas such as social welfare. It was also pointed out that, while development in general was not a direct responsibility of the Red Cross and Red Crescent, the Movement nevertheless had a

crucial role to play as a factor for development in the humanitarian domain.

The Assembly adopted a resolution on the role of the Red Cross and Red Crescent in development. It recommended, moreover, that the League should give priority support to programmes and structural development of the National Societies in countries having relatively large vulnerable populations. A further resolution concerning the role of women in Red Cross and Red Crescent development programmes was adopted, with the intention of submitting it to the Council of Delegates (*see above, page 35*).

7. Relief

The number of vulnerable people and hence the number of disaster victims is growing: this means that Red Cross and Red Crescent aid is required more and more often. If the League is to respond to this challenge, in a climate of growing interest in humanitarian aid and vigorous competition among relief organizations, then it must swiftly increase its effectiveness.

After this summary of the disaster relief scene, presented by the League's Disaster Relief Commission in its report to the General Assembly, the latter adopted two resolutions for presentation to the Council of Delegates. One dealt with the coordination of non-governmental relief in peacetime disasters, while the other was concerned with stimulating international humanitarian assistance for disaster prevention (*see above, page 39*).

In order to help strengthen the operational capacity of the League and the National Societies, the Rules for the Disaster Relief Emergency Fund were amended to authorize the withdrawal of an amount not exceeding 500,000 Swiss francs per annum in order to prepare for and provide relief and assistance in the event of disasters.

Another resolution relating to greater assistance to victims by the League stresses the importance of disaster preparedness and prevention assistance in disaster-prone countries.

8. Health and community services

AIDS, first aid, the health of women and children and voluntary non-remunerated blood donation were the main issues raised by the

Health and Community Services Commission, whose report was presented to the General Assembly.

The Assembly adopted a resolution on the *fight against AIDS*, which urged the National Societies to take a resolute stand against all forms of AIDS-related discrimination, both at national and international levels. It encouraged the National Societies to continue to improve their anti-AIDS programmes, making special efforts to inform, care for and support people living with HIV/AIDS, to facilitate their integration into the community and to involve them in HIV/AIDS-related activities. The Assembly also requested the National Societies to gather sufficient funds at national, regional and international level to enable each of them and the League to make a sustained contribution to the global fight against HIV and AIDS.

The Assembly adopted a resolution on *first aid* which, recognizing the important contribution that first-aid programmes of National Societies were able to make to disaster preparedness and response and the League's commitment to the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction, urged the National Societies, among other things, to review their first-aid training programmes and to ensure that their content was based on the priority health needs of vulnerable individuals, families and communities in terms of the common disasters and emergencies to which they are exposed in their everyday lives.

In a resolution on the *health of women and children*, the National Societies were asked to encourage heads of State and their governments to ratify and implement the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. The Societies were also urged to strengthen and develop activities to reduce the vulnerability of women and children.

The principle of *voluntary, non-remunerated blood donation* was reaffirmed by the Assembly, which supported the Hanover Statement on the Ethics of Voluntary Blood Donation, as slightly amended by the League and the International Group of Experts. This Statement specifies that "no coercion or pressure should be brought to bear on a potential donor to donate" and that "every transfusion service should have current detailed criteria for donor selection and deferral".

9. South Africa

The General Assembly adopted a resolution presented by the Red Cross Transitional Assistance Group (REDTAG) set up to help the

South African Red Cross; the ICRC contributes via its delegation in South Africa to the Group's work. According to REDTAG, progress had been made in the previous two years, favoured by the recent political developments there. The resolution invited the South African Red Cross to ensure that the recruitment of members was increased in particular among the disadvantaged communities by involving all racial groups in leadership at all levels of the Society, and to improve its capacity to offer services, especially in the large black communities.

The mandate of the League's delegation in South Africa was extended for another year.

CHANGE OF NAME FOR THE LEAGUE

The General Assembly voted in favour of changing the name of the League, which now becomes the *International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies*.

The organization began life in 1919 as the "League of Red Cross Societies". It soon became the "League of Red Cross, Red Crescent and Red Lion and Sun Societies", a name it retained until 1983, when the red crescent emblem was adopted by the National Society of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

The change of name is intended to reflect more accurately the nature of the organization and its universal character.

This decision came into force at the end of the VIIIth session of the General Assembly.

* * *

It should be noted that a number of statutory meetings were held within the Movement on and after 25 November 1991: the Commission for the Financing of the ICRC; the Commission on the Red Cross, Red Crescent and Peace; the 28th session of the League Executive Council; the Finance Commission; and the League's four statutory Commissions on Development, Disaster Relief, Youth, and Health and Community Services.

**Respect for international humanitarian law:
ICRC review of five years of activity
(1987-1991)**

One of the main objectives of International Conferences of the Red Cross and Red Crescent, which bring together Red Cross and Red Crescent institutions and the States party to the Geneva Conventions, is to promote respect for international humanitarian law during armed conflicts.

The 26th International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent, which was to be held in Budapest between 28 November and 6 December 1991, was postponed indefinitely because of political differences. The ICRC deplores this regrettable state of affairs; it nevertheless wishes to make known and share its thoughts and concerns with regard to respect for humanitarian law. It is therefore today sending, to all States party to the Geneva Conventions and National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, the text of the report it had intended to present on the subject at the Conference.

In view of the serious humanitarian issues to which it refers and the urgent attention they require, I am convinced that the publication of this report will help us pursue a dialogue which is more necessary than ever with all States and National Societies.

Cornelio Sommaruga
President
International Committee of the Red Cross

Geneva, 10 December 1991

Only a few years ago, the climate that prevailed in international relations could certainly justify the scepticism of those who regarded international meetings as no more than a ritual exercise, too often lacking any real purpose. The division of the world into blocks entrenched in antagonistic and seemingly irreconcilable ideological positions nearly always defeated attempts, however praiseworthy, to go beyond mere declarations of intent and get to grips with the major problems of our time, in a spirit of dialogue and conciliation. This state of affairs was particularly evident in the United Nations, where the great powers vetoed each other's proposals while continuing to engage in an arms race both economically ruinous and morally indefensible in a world suffering from hunger. Those same powers were thus reduced to coexistence in a weird kind of peace based on nuclear deterrence, or on the prospect of mutual annihilation. Their struggles for influence over distant parts of the world led to the revival of old antagonisms or even to the outbreak of war in certain countries, some of which had only recently won their independence. The arms race thus spread to regional conflicts, feeding on local quarrels, ideological confrontations, blind fanaticism and sectarianism, and individual ambition for power.

With support from outside, these interminable conflicts embroiled and weakened Third World populations which were already prey to deteriorating economies and natural disasters entailing famine and epidemics. The upheavals caused by struggles between rival factions contributed to the disintegration of political, economic and social structures.

Such is the political context in which the ICRC has been obliged to work in recent decades. This situation of contagious violence has led to a slow but inexorable erosion of humanitarian law, which is rejected by some belligerents in the name of ideology, immediate military advantage or political and strategic considerations, with no regard for humanitarian requirements.

My late lamented predecessor, Alexandre Hay, referred to these disquieting facts when he drew the attention of the 25th Conference in Geneva in 1986 to the fact that not only had there been an increase in the

number of conflicts in which the ICRC had been called upon to intervene, but also that conflicts were lasting longer as resort to force supplanted negotiation. This in turn led to greater radicalization, reflected in the attitude of belligerents towards the victims.

In the face of the consequences of so many conflicts, two facts became self-evident to the ICRC: first, that if violations of humanitarian law were allowed to multiply, there would be a tendency to forget that the situation was then bound to deteriorate, and secondly, that despite the accuracy of the ICRC's diagnoses of the causes of so much suffering, belligerents and the international community alike were still incapable of either prescribing appropriate remedies or applying them without delay. In recognition of these facts, the ICRC launched an appeal for humanitarian mobilization addressed to all the States party to the Geneva Conventions, all National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies and, through the media, to the public at large.

The aim of this appeal was to raise awareness of humanitarian issues among political leaders by showing them that in any conflict, international or internal, there are humanitarian requirements which people disregard at their peril. States were called upon not only to respect but also to ensure respect for international humanitarian law. The response to this appeal fell short of what had been hoped for.

At this perhaps more propitious time, I should like to call upon States and National Societies to work together more closely than in the past for a renewed humanitarian mobilization.

Developments in international relations: hopes and fears

The reason why I thought it necessary to take a brief look back at the past before recapitulating the activities of the ICRC was that the climate of international relations has been profoundly changed by the momentous events of recent years. This should also affect the political context in which the ICRC has to work. The political trends in Eastern Europe and developments in the relations among the great powers have relegated the Cold War to the past and have paved the way towards ending several ongoing conflicts. States which only yesterday were on implacably hostile terms are today working together with the great powers with a view to ending the confrontation in which they were trapped. Against the background of this prodigious acceleration of history, the nations of Europe, first divided and then cruelly separated in the aftermath of the Second World War, have been the first to seek a new political order, the most striking symbol of which is the fall of the Berlin Wall in November 1989; but these changes reach far beyond the confines of Europe to find an echo

in the heartland of every continent. New political, economic and security relationships are being formed, and new projects are emerging which are full of potential, but they will have to match the aspirations they arouse if we are to avoid any backlash leading once again to violence. A resurgence of the nationalism that was believed to be buried in the past, and events occurring in various parts of the world, such as those in Yugoslavia, call for renewed vigilance. Other obstacles stand in the way of establishing a more equitable and peaceful world — North-South social and economic imbalances, discrimination against minorities within national entities, runaway population growth, endemic poverty, mass migrations, increasing damage to the environment, intolerance and racism.

It would be presumptuous of me to comment further on history which is being made day by day. As we all know, events only seldom reveal their full significance at the time of their occurrence. Yet it seems to me that at this stage in the evolution of international relations, three favourable developments should be emphasized — first, the new importance attached by many political leaders to respect for the rules of international law and for human rights as essential factors for the maintenance of peace and security; secondly, the progress made in disarmament negotiations; and, lastly, the peaceful settlement of certain conflicts and the diplomatic measures being taken to seek settlement for those which are still outstanding.

In this connection I should like to pay a tribute to the untiring and successful efforts made by the Secretary-General of the United Nations to restore peace to Namibia, Angola and Cambodia and to his continuing endeavours to put an end to the conflicts in El Salvador, the Western Sahara and Afghanistan. The negotiations on the Arab-Israeli conflict undertaken at the initiative of the United States and the Soviet Union may be added to the list of long-awaited prospects of peace.

Although these trends which are emerging in international relations are so many signs of progress and reasons for hope, it should not be forgotten that for many long years the ICRC, which has witnessed an increasing number of violations of the Geneva Conventions and their Additional Protocols, has repeatedly sought the support of States to enable it to carry out fully the mandate entrusted to it by the international community. It is no easy matter to persuade States in conflict to maintain the fragile balance between humanitarian requirements and military demands. During all these years, the ICRC's right to discharge its mandate has all too often been denied or at least restricted by those very States which had undertaken to respect minimum humanitarian rules in time of conflict.

The international community of today is imbued with a different spirit. It now has to influence events in order to turn back the tide of practices contrary to international humanitarian law; such practices can

easily be measured against the extent of ICRC activities since 1987, particularly those in favour of prisoners and civilian populations.

Prisoners of war

With regard to international conflicts, the Third Geneva Convention relative to the treatment of prisoners of war lays down some simple and practical rules which define the obligations incumbent on a Detaining Power. This Convention establishes the material living conditions and treatment to which prisoners are entitled.

But special emphasis must be laid on three provisions of the Convention which are essential for the protection of prisoners of war. The first is the obligation on the Detaining Power, immediately upon the capture of the prisoner, to notify the ICRC of his identity, in order to inform his power of origin, and above all his family, of his capture. By such notification, the Detaining Power acknowledges its responsibilities under the Convention towards enemy soldiers who have fallen into its hands. Failure to fulfil this obligation deprives the prisoner of legal existence, leaves him open to arbitrary treatment by those who hold him, and condemns his family to the anguish of uncertainty and waiting.

Another provision essential for observance of the Convention is the one set out in Article 126, which entitles ICRC delegates to visit, at any time and without any limit on frequency or duration, all places where prisoners of war are held and to interview them freely and without witnesses. Such visits constitute an important monitoring mechanism, and refusal by any party to authorize them will undermine observance of the Convention as a whole. In such circumstances, the opposing party might be inclined, in violation of the Convention, to adopt the same attitude by way of retaliation.

My third and last consideration concerns the general repatriation of prisoners of war. In this connection, Article 118 provides that, and I quote: *"Prisoners of war shall be released and repatriated without delay after the cessation of active hostilities"*.

This clause has been the subject of many temporizing political interpretations which we have resolutely contested because they have the effect of keeping prisoners in captivity for many years after a cease-fire has been declared, either under agreements between the parties or through Security Council resolutions. Prisoners of war thus become hostages in the political negotiations entered into after hostilities have ceased: this is what happened to prisoners in the conflicts between Iran and Iraq, between Chad and Libya, and between Ethiopia and Somalia, all conflicts

where ICRC activities were hampered by serious and persistent violations of the Third Convention.

Throughout the war that broke out between Iraq and Iran in 1980, neither party notified the ICRC of the identity of prisoners it held. The ICRC was reduced to registering itself the prisoners to whom it had access. In Iran, visits by ICRC delegates were constantly subject to restrictions and to incidents which led to a suspension of all activities between October 1984 and December 1986. In 1987, the ICRC was authorized by the Iranian government to resume its activities, but within a very restrictive interpretation of Article 126, which in particular limited the frequency and duration of visits to camps and the right of delegates to interview the Iraqi prisoners of their choice without witnesses. At the end of 1987 these restrictions were still in force and the ICRC was once again compelled to suspend activities, at the same time noting that the Iranian authorities were not allowing it access to all prisoners. In Iraq, the delegates were permitted to make regular visits to several camps without hindrance, but were refused access to other places of detention. The annual reports on our activities have described these difficulties in detail, and I therefore do not propose to give an exhaustive account of this long and arduous conflict, with all its lingering humanitarian problems that remain to be resolved, particularly with regard to prisoners. On completion of the repatriation operations which started on 15 August 1990, or two years after the effective entry into force of the cease-fire established under Security Council resolution 598, more than 79,000 prisoners of war had returned to their country, but each party nevertheless accuses the other of still holding prisoners in captivity. Without any notifications, the ICRC is not in a position to give an accurate estimate of their numbers, and the relatives of these prisoners are in despair, as are tens of thousands of families with no news of soldiers missing in action.

In the conflict between Chad and Libya, the picture is equally bleak. Despite intensive ICRC initiatives after the cease-fire of 11 September 1987, the government of President Hissène Habré, in violation of the Third Convention, refused to authorize any ICRC visits to Libyan prisoners of war held in Chad. No notifications were sent. In December 1990, during the hours following the overthrow of that government, some of the prisoners were able to make contact with Libyan diplomatic representatives in the capital of Chad and to return to their country. Some 600 others, with no ICRC protection or supervision, were moved in planes chartered by the government of the United States first to Nigeria, then to Zaire and finally to Kenya. When at last authorized to visit them, the ICRC found in the course of interviews without witnesses that 250 of them wanted to return to their country. In Libya, the ICRC was authorized, in January 1988, to visit 89 prisoners who were repatriated to Chad on 22 September

of that year as part of an operation under OAU auspices which enabled a total of 214 Chadian prisoners to return home.

Another example: after the conflict in 1977 between Ethiopia and Somalia in the Ogaden, the ICRC had been allowed only sporadic visits, under conditions not in conformity with the Third Convention, to 227 Ethiopian and 236 Somali prisoners. This situation continued until August 1988, when the two governments organized the repatriation of all prisoners. The ICRC, called in by both governments to conduct the operations, then confirmed something that it had for many years suspected to be the case, namely, that for eleven years the Somali government, despite untiring ICRC endeavours, had been depriving 3,300 Ethiopian prisoners of war and civilian internees of the protection of the Convention and had been detaining them in particularly appalling physical and psychological conditions.

To these three examples should be added the violations of the law noted during the Gulf war, when the government of Iraq refused the ICRC access to prisoners who had fallen into its hands during the invasion of Kuwait and during the hostilities which later broke out against the forces of the international coalition. But I shall return to this conflict later.

So there is indeed a pressing need today to ensure the full implementation of the Third Convention. In the new climate of international relations, this is an objective that must be resolutely pursued by the States.

Humanitarian law in internal conflicts

This analysis would be quite incomplete if it were confined to international conflicts. We have observed that sometimes through ignorance and more often as a matter of policy, a distinction is drawn between the rules of humanitarian law applicable in international conflicts and those governing internal conflicts. Whereas from the point of view of legal logic the law distinguishes between these two types of conflict, the applicable humanitarian provisions are essentially identical and are based on the same principle, that of respect for persons who take no part in hostilities or who are *hors de combat*.

It would indeed be absurd to condone in the case of internal conflicts acts which are condemned by international law and morality in the context of inter-State relations or to accept that the law should recognize different levels of perception and tolerance in the face of the same pain and suffering depending on whether the conflict is internal or international. Humanitarian law, through the provisions of Article 3 common to the Geneva Conventions supplemented by those of Protocol II additional to those Conventions, has risen above such contradictions and has founded,

even within national boundaries, a genuine law of humanity under which the individual, his physical integrity and his dignity must be respected on the basis of moral principles which transcend the narrow limits of international law. It is in this sense that the treaty rules applicable to internal conflicts oblige all the parties to accord humane treatment to non-combatant civilians, the wounded and sick, and prisoners. With a view to maintaining the strictly humanitarian nature of these provisions, the last paragraph of Article 3 specifies that their application shall not affect the legal status of the parties to the conflict. We have noted, however, that in the particular case of prisoners, the parties tend to give priority to what they regard as their political and security imperatives, and only too often contest the applicability of the law and invoke their national sovereignty in refusing to allow us to intervene, thus creating a particularly difficult context for our efforts in this respect.

Nevertheless, through patient negotiations some progress has been made. In Sri Lanka our representatives are allowed to visit prisoners in government hands and on several occasions have been able to intervene in favour of a handful of prisoners held by a Tamil opposition movement. In Afghanistan, they are also allowed to visit governmental places of detention and have been able to help government soldiers captured by certain armed opposition groups. In Mozambique and Uganda, the authorities have given us access to prisons, and also in Rwanda, after the clashes that took place in October 1990. In Latin America, in the El Salvador conflict, our visits have continued without interruption, while in Nicaragua they ended in 1990 since all the prisoners had been released. In Yugoslavia, since the outbreak of fighting last July, ICRC delegates have visited several thousand people held by various parties to the conflict; some of them have been released under ICRC supervision, notably on the basis of an agreement concluded with the parties to the conflict on 6 November of this year.

These developments are certainly encouraging by comparison with the as yet unsuccessful attempts to intervene in other conflicts in Africa, the Middle East and Asia. In this regard, the situation in Angola calls for further consideration. Throughout this conflict, the parties only exceptionally granted the ICRC access to prisoners they held, and this refusal was maintained until the signature of the Estoril Peace Agreements in Portugal on 31 May of this year. After 16 years of war, these agreements established a cease-fire and a process of normalization leading to elections in the autumn of 1992. Both parties to the agreements undertook to release all their prisoners and then asked the ICRC to register them and subsequently to supervise their release. This peaceful outcome would have been made much easier if the ICRC had been authorized to discharge its mandate throughout the conflict. Imagine how much suffering those

prisoners and their families could have been spared in all those endless years!

In Ethiopia, until the fall of the Mengistu government which put an end to hostilities, ICRC representations had always met with a flat refusal from all parties. In Sudan and in Somalia, our efforts remain fruitless to this day, while there has recently been some progress in Liberia. In the Western Sahara conflict, the different views of the parties on whether the conflict is international or internal have proved to be a constant barrier to our activities: from the outset of that conflict in 1975, the ICRC has only once — in 1987 — been authorized to visit 75 Sahraoui prisoners held by the Moroccan government, while our delegates have had access in eight very widely spaced visits to 935 Moroccan prisoners held by the Polisario Front. Apart from the tragic consequences in humanitarian terms for the prisoners concerned — some of whom have been held captive for more than 15 years — care has to be taken to ensure that this issue does not hamper the efforts being made under United Nations auspices to reach a peaceful settlement of the conflict. As developments in Angola have shown, respect for humanitarian law would have helped to preserve, during the period of the conflict itself, that measure of human compassion which, in due course, also facilitates the restoration of peace. In Lebanon, ICRC delegates can visit prisoners held by certain factions, while others still categorically refuse them access. In the security zone they have also been denied access to prisoners under the control of the South Lebanon Army and the Israeli armed forces. The ICRC also still has no information on the fate of Israeli servicemen who have been reported missing for years in Lebanon. With regard to the many hostages held in that country, in flagrant violation of fundamental legal and humanitarian principles, we have repeatedly called for their release and have publicly condemned such practices. In Cambodia, new hope has arisen with the signature of the peace agreement in Paris on 23 October 1991. Here again, in this long-suffering region which has given such constant cause for concern, we have been unable to work on behalf of prisoners held by any of the parties to the conflict: their fate is highly uncertain, as is that of the civilian population, over which the parties to the conflict have persistently fought for control. Last of all, in Myanmar, a country which has been ravaged by civil strife for decades, our approaches have met with no favourable response from the authorities, and the victims there have been deprived of any protection whatsoever.

The parties to internal conflicts very often publicly declare that the prisoners they hold are treated humanely. Such statements may sound reassuring, but are they to be believed when these same parties refuse to grant the ICRC access to the prisoners in question? I therefore appeal to the States concerned to respond favourably to the approaches we have

made to them, and thus to provide tangible proof of their willingness to comply with the minimum humanitarian requirements that the international community has laid down in the Geneva Conventions.

Protection of civilians

The purpose of humanitarian law is not only to protect wounded combatants or those, like prisoners, who are *hors de combat*. Under the provisions of the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949 and the two Additional Protocols of 1977, protection is extended to civilians not taking an active part in hostilities.

As we all know, developments in weaponry during this century have made warfare more and more totally destructive. This increased weapon power is accompanied in many conflicts by increased political intransigence and blind hatred on the part of the belligerents, of which civilians are the first and most numerous victims. We have seen it again: war is everywhere, it subjects cities to indiscriminate bombing and shelling, it destroys the infrastructure essential for sustaining life, it infiltrates through guerrilla tactics the very core of peoples who are thus directly exposed to arbitrary treatment and reprisals by the parties fighting for their control. Entire civilian populations trapped by war and threatened by famine are deprived of assistance because the belligerents wilfully refuse to allow the ICRC or other humanitarian agencies to bring them relief. In Afghanistan, in Angola, in Mozambique, in Cambodia and in Somalia, indiscriminate mine-laying has rendered vast tracts of agricultural land useless and has killed or mutilated hundreds of thousands of civilians, a great many of them children.

This report is but a brief account of the immeasurable and pointless suffering inflicted on civilians which we have witnessed. I shall therefore, with no regard for chronological order, just touch on some of the situations in which there have been particularly serious breaches of humanitarian law and which have prompted us publicly to express our distress and disapproval.

Acts of war against civilians

In January 1987, during the war between Iran and Iraq, renewed bombing of civilian targets, particularly the cities of Baghdad and Tehran, led the ICRC publicly to condemn these indiscriminate acts of war. In view of the escalating reprisals and counter-reprisals, the ICRC at the same time informed all States party to the Geneva Conventions of the

representations it had made to both belligerents and in particular requested Member States of the United Nations Security Council and the Secretary-General of the United Nations to support its initiatives. After a lull, the bombing resumed in February 1988, killing several hundred civilians. But worse was to come: on 23 March 1988, several thousand civilians met a horrible death in the Kurdish town of Halabja, victims of chemical bombs. The ICRC then publicly denounced the use of such weapons, which are strictly prohibited under the 1925 Geneva Protocol.

In Lebanon also, the civilian population was subjected to the most terrible trials. In March 1989, Beirut and villages in the Chouf came under very heavy shelling. Artillery battles between General Aoun's forces and the pro-Syrian forces and Lebanese factions rained fire for six months on a civilian population forced to huddle in cellars or makeshift shelters. Relief workers of the Lebanese Red Cross were able to evacuate casualties only by running terrible risks and showing admirable courage. Electricity was cut-off, which led to the breakdown of the water distribution system in large parts of the capital, forcing about a million people to seek refuge in quieter areas. Throughout those months, the ICRC maintained a major assistance operation to supply hospitals and bring relief to the civilian population. In its efforts to persuade all the parties to the conflict to call humanitarian truces, the ICRC repeatedly appealed for respect for the most elementary principles of humanitarian law in the treatment of civilians, but by the time the fighting ended, more than 1,000 civilians had been killed and 5,000 wounded. In January 1990, heavy artillery fighting broke out afresh, this time between Christian factions in northern and East Beirut, and the same tragedies were re-enacted.

The effects of war on civilian populations have again become a grim reality in the conflict which is tearing Yugoslavia apart. Hundreds of thousands of civilians have been forced to flee the combat zones, the injured and the sick are refused assistance and protection and whole cities are shelled and blockaded by the besieging forces. For five months now the ICRC has been appealing to the parties to the conflict to abide by the elementary rules of law. It is indeed fortunate that the Presidents of the six Republics signed, at The Hague on 5 November of this year, a declaration undertaking to respect and to ensure respect for humanitarian law and humanitarian principles and expressing unreserved support for ICRC activities. I earnestly hope that on the basis of this declaration the parties will preserve a measure of humanity, will allow humanitarian truces to be concluded and will ensure that the red cross emblem is fully respected, and that blind passion and hatred will no longer override humanitarian considerations.

Civilians under occupation

In another context, 1987 marked the twentieth year of ICRC activity in the territories occupied by Israel. In December of that same year, the Intifada uprising began and the humanitarian situation in the occupied territories began to deteriorate alarmingly. In an attempt to give some idea of the reasons for this development, I should like to single out two factors which, among many others, may offer an explanation. The first relates to the very duration of the military occupation and the impact which certain policies of the occupying power, particularly the settlement policy pursued in violation of humanitarian law, have had on the life and sense of identity of the Palestinians. The second lies in what was then seen as the lack of any prospect of a possible settlement of the conflict, which added fuel to the flames of the popular uprising. Faced with this revolt, the Israeli armed forces and police resorted to repressive measures, acts of brutality, the use of fire-arms against civilians, the imposition of prolonged curfews, the demolition of houses, expulsions of residents from the occupied territories and mass arrests. The number of security detainees whom the ICRC has been authorized to visit regularly increased, from 4,000 in 1987 to 16,000 in 1990, and this increase in numbers inevitably led to a deterioration in conditions of detention. At the same time, the Israeli authorities intensified their programme of installing Israeli settlers in the occupied territories, and that resulted in clashes between settlers and Palestinian residents which sometimes involved fatalities. The serious humanitarian problems which ICRC delegates have noted and which I have just outlined have been raised in representations to the Israeli authorities and in a continuing dialogue with them.

In the light of these events, the question of the applicability of the Fourth Convention has become more pressing than ever. Indeed, since 1967 the Israeli authorities have contested the applicability of this Convention *de jure*, while declaring their willingness to apply some of its provisions *de facto* in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, but not in the Golan Heights and East Jerusalem, which had been unilaterally annexed. Accordingly, ICRC representations, particularly those concerning expulsions, demolition of houses and the settlement policy, generally meet with no response. The ICRC, for its part, has always considered that the provisions of this Convention are applicable to all the occupied territories, irrespective of the status assigned them by the Israeli authorities. It seems to me important to remember in this connection — but also in other similar conflict situations, such as those of East Timor and, more recently, of Kuwait under Iraqi occupation, where humanitarian law was totally ignored — that the principle of the inviolability of the rights of protected persons is set out very clearly in Article 47 of the Fourth Convention.

This article provides that "Protected persons who are in occupied territory shall not be deprived, in any case or in any manner whatsoever, of the benefits of the present Convention by any change introduced, as the result of the occupation of a territory, into the institutions or government of the said territory, nor by any agreement concluded between the authorities of the occupied territory and the Occupying Power, nor by any annexation by the latter of the whole or part of the occupied territory".

It will be seen from this provision that the sole purpose of humanitarian law is to protect people who are under the rule of a power of which they are not nationals, irrespective of any political, economic, territorial or other disputes between the parties to the conflict. Only a peace treaty can settle such issues, which cannot condition the applicability of humanitarian law without distorting the scope of that law.

Victims' right to assistance and protection

In Africa, although Namibia, Angola and Ethiopia have again found the way to peace after many long years of war, we cannot forget the dreadful suffering caused to civilians by these conflicts, whose effects continue to be felt long after the fighting itself. Who can forget the harrowing pictures published by the media in 1984 of men, women and children trapped by war and decimated by famine in the Ethiopian provinces of Tigray and Wollo and in Eritrea? These are the same agonized faces that our delegates have seen in the conflicts in southern Sudan, Somalia, Mozambique and Liberia. In view of the enormous scale of these tragedies, the ICRC, together with other humanitarian relief agencies, has become involved in vast assistance and protection operations. Since our annual reports give a detailed account of these activities, I shall now confine my remarks to some more general considerations.

While in recent years we have received very considerable financial, material and logistic resources from the governments and National Societies which support our activities — and I should like to take this opportunity of expressing our profound gratitude to them — we have had to conclude that the availability of these resources has not necessarily meant that victims could be helped without delay. Before taking action, we first had to overcome many political obstacles through complex and prolonged negotiations in order to ensure that all parties to the conflict would allow us to assist all victims without any discrimination. And that was not the end of our difficulties: once an operation was launched, our activities in the field were often restricted, thwarted and indeed sometimes totally paralysed because of new decisions or demands by the parties which ran counter to agreements previously reached. That was the kind of obstacle

that the ICRC encountered in Ethiopia in 1987 and again in April 1988 when the government forced it to suspend all its activities and to withdraw all its personnel immediately. Five months after launching a public appeal to all the parties to open the roads in order to allow humanitarian relief convoys to reach the victims, the ICRC, which had already brought help to more than half a million people, saw its work brought to a standstill; yet the Ethiopian government did not reverse its decision, despite repeated public appeals.

In Sudan, after two years of negotiations conducted with the government and with leaders of the Sudanese People's Liberation Army fighting in the south of the country, the ICRC was finally able in December 1988 to set up a very large-scale operation to bring assistance simultaneously to the civilian populations living in the zones controlled by each of the parties. Over a six-month period, more than 16,000 tonnes of relief supplies were airlifted to combat zones which were inaccessible by any other means. Despite our resolute commitment, our assistance activities were nonetheless repeatedly interrupted and severely hampered because of decisions taken by the parties concerned.

In Mozambique too, political and security constraints prevented our relief activities from reaching all the victims.

In Somalia and Liberia, political difficulties compounded by the violence and confusion of the fighting forced the ICRC to interrupt its activities and temporarily to withdraw its personnel for reasons of security.

There is obviously no need to underscore the tragic consequences of these denials of access for the civilian population. How can such decisions be justified when it is known that in some conflicts they spell death for tens of thousands of innocent civilians? Such attitudes, which seriously erode the right of civilian victims to receive relief, recognized by the Geneva Conventions and their Additional Protocols, have given rise to other tragedies, by causing mass population movements and forcing millions of civilians to swell the flood of refugees now camping in wretched conditions on the borders of Sudan, Ethiopia, Somalia, Malawi and other African countries. If the belligerents had permitted the full deployment of humanitarian activities, a great many of these civilians would not have been compelled to flee. Moreover, these denials of access have jeopardized the effective use of resources and relief provided by donors, who might on those grounds reconsider their support, thus calling into question their humanitarian duty of international solidarity — something we regard as an absolute moral and political obligation which cannot be evaded by any State having the requisite means. Yet, as we have said before, the solidarity we uphold on behalf of the victims cannot work on its own. If it is to be effective, the parties to the conflict must show the same sense of duty by fulfilling their obligations under humanitarian law,

recognizing the victims' right to relief and protection, and authorizing the ICRC to act without hindrance in accordance with its mandate as a neutral intermediary and its fundamental principles.

In this connection, parties sometimes accuse us of being too intransigent in our negotiations, but, as we know, in order to be effective, ICRC assistance and protection activities should be conducted in conformity with operational ethics based on impartiality, independence and neutrality, thus ensuring that any action taken will be for the benefit of all victims. Such ethics are also a prerequisite for gaining and keeping the trust of all parties to a conflict. These are the essential principles from which we can never depart and the criteria which ICRC delegates must use in the field to assess victims' needs, to organize relief and to monitor its use. Without such criteria, there would be a very great risk that humanitarian aid might become a mere cover serving the interests of partisan politics or that it might be diverted from those for whom it is intended. As we have seen, it is not always easy to persuade parties to allow us to operate in this way in the midst of their conflicts. In this connection, our ability to convince our partners in negotiation depends not only on the unqualified support that we expect from the States party to the Geneva Conventions, but also on the backing given to us by all the National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies in conformity with the fundamental principles of our Movement.

At this point in my consideration of the issues that have marked ICRC activities in recent years, and in the hope that I have been able to convey to you matters which, I believe, remain a source of constant concern, I should have liked to have concluded, but I have yet to mention events which are still fresh in our minds and are fraught with consequence not only for those actively involved and for the victims but also for the ICRC and other humanitarian organizations. I am of course referring to the Gulf war.

Gulf war

The reason why I have deliberately chosen to discuss this conflict in the latter part of this report is because in its various stages, as considerable forces confronted each other over a very short space of time, it encapsulated in an unprecedented way all the humanitarian issues with which we are concerned. It also compels us to take a rather different view of the future.

Methods and means of combat

In the months following the invasion of Kuwait, as ICRC approaches met with repeated refusals from Iraq, as violations of human rights

proliferated in occupied Kuwait and as diplomatic moves sanctioned by so many Security Council resolutions ended in a stalemate, the prospect of war loomed larger and our hopes for a political settlement dwindled daily. At the same time new threats arose and, aware of the danger that chemical, bacteriological or other weapons of mass destruction might be used, the ICRC, in view of Security Council resolution 678 which authorized the use of force, took the initiative on 14 December 1990 of addressing a memorandum to all States party to the Geneva Conventions. This move was backed up some days later by a message to all the governments of the coalition countries and to the government of Iraq, whereby the ICRC reminded all the parties of their commitments under the 1949 Geneva Conventions and of the provisions of the law of war which prohibit the use of chemical and bacteriological weapons. It also called upon States which were not yet party to Additional Protocol I to take all necessary measures to ensure, in the event of conflict, respect for all objects indispensable for the survival of the civilian population, for the natural environment and for installations containing dangerous forces, such as nuclear power plants. On 17 January, when the hostilities began, the ICRC made a public appeal urging all the parties not to use atomic weapons.

While it is most fortunate that such weapons were not used, the potential threat loomed throughout the war, sending entire civilian populations scurrying into shelters, with their gas masks on and faces thus dehumanized, living symbols of the menace hanging over them. Missiles were fired indiscriminately, blindly striking the population of Israel and several other countries of the Gulf region and giving new reality to fears with which we had unconsciously learned to live during the period of the arms race. The manner in which the military operations were conducted also made us aware of the destruction that war can bring to the natural environment. The most serious damage caused by the firing of the Kuwaiti oilfields and the pouring of oil into the sea has largely been contained, but the consequences will be felt for a long time to come. The international community must now heed the warning sounded by these events. That is one of the lessons of the war, which should in particular stimulate the efforts of those who are continuing to make progress in disarmament negotiations. Treaties on arms reduction should no longer be considered a simple matter of seeking a new military, strategic or political balance of power: we know better than before that they involve the moral duty of mankind to protect itself against itself.

With this consideration in mind, I should like to emphasize that States which ratify the Additional Protocols can also participate in the disarmament process. Indeed, the provisions of those instruments relating to methods of combat show that the right of parties to a conflict to choose means of warfare is not unlimited. There again, a further effort

should be made to bring about the ratification of the Protocols by all States.

ICRC action during the Gulf war

In the midst of this conflict, the ICRC could not confine itself to making representations or noting, without being able to remedy the situation on its own, the manifold violations of humanitarian law of which civilians in Kuwait were the first victims. At an early stage, it deployed a vast assistance and co-operation programme with the Jordanian Red Crescent and the League of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, when thousands of foreign nationals forced to leave Kuwait and Iraq poured into Jordan; over 150,000 people were assisted by this operation. In January 1991, observing the effects of the embargo on the Iraqi civilian population, the ICRC began to send relief supplies to Iraq in pursuance of Article 23 of the Fourth Convention. ICRC involvement took on a new dimension when very violent internal conflicts broke out first in the south and then in the north of Iraq, thus prolonging the effects of the war. With the agreement of the authorities, the ICRC had access to these zones and assisted more than 300,000 people in Iraqi Kurdistan, bringing them 15,000 tonnes of emergency food supplies. It also took action on several occasions on behalf of prisoners captured during these conflicts. At the same time, in Iran, where more than a million Kurds and Iraqi Shiites had taken refuge, the ICRC provided support for the Iranian Red Crescent: 7,000 tonnes of relief supplies, 16,000 tents and 550,000 blankets were distributed to these displaced people who were in a state of utter deprivation. At the same time, when a threat of serious epidemics arose in Baghdad and several of the provinces, the ICRC launched large-scale operations and technical programmes to restore the drinking water supply, which had been severely disrupted by coalition bombing of power stations. At the height of its activities, the ICRC delegation in Iraq comprised 314 people, 214 of whom were seconded from National Societies, and, with their efficient help, four field hospitals were set up in Iraqi Kurdistan. In Iran, 80 delegates from different National Societies came to work in ICRC operations. The Turkish authorities however declined the ICRC's offer to send delegates to areas bordering on Iraq where several hundred thousand Kurds fleeing the combat zones had gathered in a matter of days.

With regard to the prisoners of war held by Iraq, the stalemate was finally broken on 27 February when Iraq, in accepting Security Council resolution 687 which put an end to hostilities, then undertook to facilitate the repatriation of all Kuwaiti civilians and nationals of third countries, together with all prisoners of war held since the invasion of Kuwait. On

7 March, in accordance with its mandate as a neutral intermediary, the ICRC organized a meeting in Riyadh bringing together military representatives of the coalition forces and of Iraq. An agreement was signed on the procedures and time-table of operations under which the ICRC was to repatriate more than 6,600 Kuwaiti prisoners of war and civilian internees, 64 coalition prisoners and more than 71,000 Iraqi prisoners of war and civilians. It should be recalled here that upon the outbreak of hostilities the ICRC had been authorized, in accordance with its mandate and the provisions of the Third Convention, to visit all the prisoners captured by the coalition forces, but that the government of Iraq consistently rejected our representations, in flagrant violation of this Convention. For the same reasons, the ICRC never gained access to Kuwait throughout the entire Iraqi occupation. The civilian population was subjected to reprisals, coercion, arrests and deportation, not to mention the plunder of public and private property, and the fate of a large number of Kuwaiti soldiers and civilians deported to Iraq remains uncertain to this day. Immediately after the liberation of Kuwait, in view of the acts of violence and denials of justice prevailing there, the ICRC offered its services to the authorities and obtained permission to visit people held on the grounds of collaborating with the enemy. It also took steps to protect people who were under expulsion orders. In this context, the problem of stateless persons is still a matter of great concern for the ICRC.

I shall conclude my analysis here, since my intention was not to draw up a complete inventory of conflicts, but to use the most telling examples to draw attention to the significance and scope of humanitarian law and to demonstrate the tragic consequences that its rejection or only partial implementation will inevitably entail for the victims. To that extent, my remarks apply to all conflicts.

Conclusions

While the effects of so many wars have been partly contained by constantly expanding humanitarian action, I have to admit to you that we at the ICRC are very often dismayed by the urgent need to find solutions which always seem to elude our grasp. Of course, we remain determined to pursue our mission and to intensify our efforts, but what we need to be able to make progress is evidence from all governments party to the Conventions of a similar determination to match their commitments by their actions.

Pacta sunt servanda! That is my first conclusion. Article 1 common to the Geneva Conventions leaves room for no possible doubt on the matter, since *the High Contracting Parties undertake to respect and to ensure respect for humanitarian law in all circumstances.*

This is a clear legal obligation, primarily engaging the individual responsibility of States in conflict, but at the same time having a wider scope, since every State party to the Conventions is bound to ensure respect for the law. That is why, when a State violates the commitment it entered into by ratifying the Conventions, all other States must feel concerned. So what is to be done?

Humanitarian law relating to international conflicts includes several provisions designed to ensure its implementation and application. This task is assigned not only to the ICRC but also to the Protecting Powers, that is, third States which belligerents should appoint upon the outbreak of hostilities. This monitoring mechanism, strengthened in 1977 with the adoption of the Additional Protocols, has nevertheless been inadequately applied and has now practically fallen into disuse. This should give us food for thought, for we believe that in many cases the appointment of Protecting Powers could help to improve the implementation of international humanitarian law by parties to a conflict.

With the adoption of the Additional Protocols, another measure was added to the system for ensuring implementation of humanitarian law. Article 90 of Protocol I provides that when not less than twenty High Contracting Parties have agreed to accept its competence, an International Fact-Finding Commission shall be established. This was in fact done on 25 June 1991, and the Commission is competent to enquire into any serious violations of the Geneva Conventions and the Protocol and to facilitate on the basis of its report the restoration of strict respect for the provisions of the law. But although 107 States have so far ratified Protocol I, only 23 have recognized the mandatory competence of the Commission. The ICRC deeply regrets this state of affairs and calls upon States which have not yet done so to recognize the competence of the Commission and thus to make a decisive contribution to strengthening respect for the rules of humanitarian law.

Finally, Article 89 of Protocol I provides that in the event of serious violations of the Conventions, the High Contracting Parties undertake to act, jointly or individually, in cooperation with the United Nations and in conformity with the United Nations Charter.

While the responsibility of States to respect and to ensure respect for humanitarian law is thus clearly established, we cannot help but note, as I have mentioned in my report, that implementation of this law meets with a great many difficulties in both international and internal conflicts. It is obviously necessary to strengthen respect for the Geneva Conventions and their Additional Protocols, and this leads me to my second conclusion, namely, that it is essential not to leave humanitarian law in a state of stagnation. The question that arises is how the joint responsibility of all the States party to the Conventions to ensure respect for the law can be

more efficiently and rigorously exercised. Will the existing implementation mechanisms suffice for the achievement of that aim or should new ones be defined and developed? I have no immediate answer, but in the new international climate this is a topic that the ICRC intends to pursue actively in consultation with the States party to the Geneva Conventions. At the same time, we must also redefine and intensify our action to disseminate humanitarian law in order to stimulate public awareness of the vital need for observance of its provisions. The National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies will clearly have to be more active in this respect in their own countries. We should also associate the media more closely into this effort, since they are often direct witnesses of the tragic consequences of violations of humanitarian law, and the impact of their reports on public opinion and government leaders has been strikingly demonstrated in recent months.

My third and final conclusion concerns the recognized need for improved coordination of humanitarian action. This matter is being debated within the United Nations system. The very scale of the needs of victims of the conflicts in Cambodia, Afghanistan, Sudan, Somalia, Mozambique, and recently of the Gulf war and its aftermath, is enough to convince us that closer coordination of humanitarian aid is indeed a necessity. Such concertation is indeed necessary to preclude any duplication of effort and enhance the efficiency of everyone concerned. The ICRC, while maintaining its independence as a strictly humanitarian, neutral and impartial institution mandated to perform the tasks assigned to it by the Geneva Conventions, is prepared to take part in such mechanisms which may be set up within the United Nations.

The ICRC further intends to improve coordination within the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement itself by establishing a broader and more intensive working relationship with the National Societies, whose help, collaboration and support are essential for the performance of the tasks entrusted to the ICRC by the Statutes of our Movement. Our solidarity will thus be strengthened and our efficiency enhanced.

The profound political upheavals of the last few years have brought us to a turning point between a past which is scarcely behind us and a future in which mankind is trying with fresh enthusiasm to redefine relationships and to rediscover human values. Let us ensure that we do not miss the opportunity history offers us today and let us work together to restore to the Red Cross and Red Crescent ideal the universal dimension which has given it full force of law.

Recognition of the Solomon Islands Red Cross Society

Circular No. 557

Geneva, 3 October 1991

*To the Central Committees of the National Red Cross
and Red Crescent Societies*

Ladies and Gentlemen,

We have the honour of informing you that the Solomon Islands Red Cross Society has been officially recognized by the International Committee of the Red Cross. This recognition, which took effect on 3 October 1991, brings to 148 the number of National Societies that are members of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement.

Formerly a branch of the British Red Cross, the Society was founded on 15 July 1983 and officially applied for recognition by the International Committee of the Red Cross on 26 July 1990. In support of its application, it forwarded various documents, including a report on its activities, the text of its Statutes and a copy of the Solomon Islands Red Cross Society Act 1983 (No. 4 of 1983) incorporating the Society. This Act was adopted by Parliament on 9 June 1983 and signed into law by the Governor-General on 6 July 1983. It attests that the Society is recognized by the Government as a voluntary aid society auxiliary to the public authorities in accordance with the provisions of the First Geneva Convention of 1949.

These documents, which were examined jointly by the International Committee of the Red Cross and the Secretariat of the League of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, showed that the ten conditions for recognition by the ICRC of a new National Society may be considered as fulfilled.

The progressive development of the Solomon Islands Red Cross Society has been closely observed by the ICRC and the League and their representatives have visited the Society several times in recent years. They have ascertained that the Society has a sound infrastructure which enables it to extend its activities throughout the national territory. These activities are being conducted in several spheres: health education, blood-donation campaigns,

assistance to sick children and to leprosy patients, active participation in the work of the National Council for disaster preparedness.

On 6 July 1981, the Swiss Federal Council, depositary of the Geneva Conventions, received notification of the declaration of succession by Solomon Islands to the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949, which entered into force retroactively from the country's accession to independence in 1978.

On 19 September 1988, Solomon Islands furthermore acceded to the two Protocols of 8 June 1977 additional to the said Conventions. The Protocols entered into force there on 19 March 1989.

The Chairman of the Solomon Islands Red Cross Society is Mr. Moon Pin L. Kwan. The headquarters is located in Honiara at the following address:

Solomon Islands Red Cross Society
P.O. Box 187
Honiara

The International Committee of the Red Cross has pleasure in welcoming the Solomon Islands Red Cross Society to membership of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, in accrediting it and commending it, by this circular, to all other National Societies, and in expressing sincere good wishes to the Society for its future and for the success of its humanitarian work.

FOR THE INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE
OF THE RED CROSS

Cornelio Sommaruga
President

ICRC confirms validity of the recognition granted by it to the Lithuanian Red Cross Society on 28 August 1923

Circular No. 558

Geneva, 20 November 1991

*To the Central Committees of the National Red Cross
and Red Crescent Societies*

Ladies and Gentlemen,

We have the honour of informing you that the International Committee of the Red Cross has confirmed its recognition of the Lithuanian Red Cross Society, originally granted on 28 August 1923. This decision, which took effect on 7 November 1991, brings to 149 the number of National Societies that are members of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement.

The Lithuanian Red Cross Society, which was founded in 1919, was incorporated into the Alliance of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies of the USSR when the Baltic countries were made part of the Soviet Union in 1940.

On 19 October 1991, the Lithuanian Red Cross Society officially requested confirmation of its previous recognition by the International Committee of the Red Cross. In support of its request it forwarded several documents, including the text of its statutes and a copy of an official note from the Lithuanian government recognizing the Lithuanian Red Cross Society as auxiliary to the public authorities in the humanitarian field.

These documents, which we examined in conjunction with the Secretariat of the League of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, showed that the ten conditions for recognition laid down in Article 4 of the Movement's Statutes have been fulfilled.

Regarding the first condition, the Republic of Lithuania's declaration of independence in the spring of 1990 was recognized in September 1991 both by the USSR and by the rest of the international community. The Lithuanian Red Cross Society is therefore clearly constituted on the territory of an independent State.

On 10 October 1991, the Lithuanian government confirmed to the Swiss Federal Council, the depositary of the Geneva Conventions, that it was still bound by the Geneva Conventions of 27 July 1929, which had been ratified by Lithuania on 27 February 1939.

Furthermore, during the joint ICRC/League mission to Lithuania from 15 to 24 September 1991, representatives of the two institutions ascertained that the Lithuanian Red Cross Society has a sound structure enabling it to extend its activities throughout the national territory. It is currently conducting these activities in several spheres: first aid, assisting elderly people, recruiting blood donors and tracing missing persons.

The Lithuanian Red Cross Society is presided over by Mr. Juozas Shakopa. It has its headquarters in Vilnius, at the following address:

Lithuanian Red Cross Society
Gediminio Ave 3a
232600 Vilnius

The International Committee of the Red Cross is pleased to welcome the Lithuanian Red Cross Society back into the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and to accredit it and commend it, by this circular, to all other National Societies. The ICRC extends its sincere good wishes to the Society for its future and for the success of its humanitarian work.

FOR THE INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE
OF THE RED CROSS

Cornelio Sommaruga
President

ICRC confirms validity of the recognition granted by it to the Latvian Red Cross Society on 10 January 1923

Circular No. 559

Geneva, 20 November 1991

*To the Central Committees of the National Red Cross
and Red Crescent Societies*

Ladies and Gentlemen,

We have the honour of informing you that the International Committee of the Red Cross has confirmed its recognition of the Latvian Red Cross Society, originally granted on 10 January 1923. This decision, which took effect on 20 November 1991, brings to 150 the number of National Societies that are members of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement.

The Latvian Red Cross Society, which was founded in 1918, was incorporated into the Alliance of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies of the USSR when the Baltic countries were made part of the Soviet Union in 1940.

On 13 November 1991, the Latvian Red Cross Society officially requested confirmation of its previous recognition by the International Committee of the Red Cross. In support of its request it forwarded several documents, including the text of its statutes and a copy of an official note from the Latvian government recognizing the Latvian Red Cross Society as auxiliary to the public authorities in the humanitarian field.

These documents, which we examined in conjunction with the Secretariat of the League of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, showed that the ten conditions for recognition laid down in Article 4 of the Movement's Statutes have been fulfilled.

Regarding the first condition, the Republic of Latvia's declaration of independence in the spring of 1990 was recognized in September 1991 both by the USSR and by the rest of the international community. The Latvian Red Cross Society is therefore clearly constituted on the territory of an independent State.

On 15 November 1991, the Latvian government confirmed to the Swiss Federal Council, the depositary of the Geneva Conventions, that it was still bound by the Geneva Conventions of 27 July 1929, which had been ratified by Latvia on 14 October 1931.

Furthermore, during the joint ICRC/League mission to Latvia from 15 to 24 September 1991, representatives of the two institutions ascertained that the Latvian Red Cross Society has a sound structure enabling it to extend its activities throughout the national territory. It is currently conducting these activities in several spheres: first aid, assisting elderly people, recruiting blood donors and tracing missing persons.

The Latvian Red Cross Society is presided over by Mr. Uldis Laucis. It has its headquarters in Riga, at the following address:

Latvian Red Cross Society
28, Skolas Street
226300 Riga

The International Committee of the Red Cross is pleased to welcome the Latvian Red Cross Society back into the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and to accredit it and commend it, by this circular, to all the National Societies. The ICRC extends its sincere good wishes to the Society for its future and for the success of its humanitarian work.

FOR THE INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE
OF THE RED CROSS

Cornelio Sommaruga
President

Declaration by the State of Qatar

On 24 September 1991 the State of Qatar made the following declaration regarding its recognition of the competence of the International Fact-Finding Commission:

“In accordance with Article 90, paragraph 2(a), of Protocol I additional to the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949, the State of Qatar declares that it recognizes *ipso facto* and without special agreement, in relation to any other High Contracting Party accepting the same obligation, the competence of the International Fact-Finding Commission to enquire into allegations by such other Party”.

The State of Qatar is the **twenty-fourth** State to make the declaration regarding the Fact-Finding Commission.

Declaration by the Togolese Republic

On 21 November 1991 the Togolese Republic made the following declaration regarding its recognition of the competence of the International Fact-Finding Commission:

“In accordance with Article 90, paragraph 2(a), of Protocol I additional to the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949, the Togolese Republic declares that it recognizes *ipso facto* and without special agreement, in relation to any other High Contracting Party accepting the same obligation, the competence of the International Fact-Finding Commission to enquire into allegations by such other Party”.

The Togolese Republic is the **twenty-fifth** State to make the declaration regarding the Fact-Finding Commission.

Accession of the Latvian Republic to the Geneva Conventions and their Additional Protocols

The Latvian Republic acceded to the four Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949 and to their Additional Protocols on 24 December 1991.

These instruments will come into force for the Latvian Republic on 24 June 1992.

The Latvian Republic is the **168th State** party to the Geneva Conventions. It is the **108th State** party to Protocol I and the **98th** to Protocol II.

States party to the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949

States party to the Protocols of 8 June 1977

as at 31 December 1991

Below we give the lists, drawn up in chronological order as at 31 December 1991, of the States which became party to the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949 during the past ten years (1982-1991) and of all the States party to Protocols I and II additional to the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949, adopted on 8 June 1977.

The names of the States are shown in abbreviated form; the number in the left-hand margin has no special significance and has been placed there merely to facilitate reference. The list of States party to the Conventions starts at number 150; for the 149 States which had previously become party to the Conventions, see

The numbering of States party to the Protocols has been divided into two columns, the first for States party to Protocol I, the second for those party to Protocol II.

The third column indicates the form of official act received by the depositary, the Swiss Federal Council: R = ratification; A = accession; S = declaration of succession.

The fourth column indicates whether the ratification or accession was accompanied by any reservations or declarations (using the State's own designation thereof). It also indicates by the abbreviation "Int. Commission" whether the State concerned has accepted the competence of the International Fact-Finding Commission by making the declaration provided for in Art. 90, para. 2, of Protocol I.

States party to the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949

(as from 1982)

	OFFICIAL DATE OF REGISTRATION	TYPE OF ACT RECEIVED	REMARKS
1982			
150 Vanuatu	27 October	A	
1983			
151 Zimbabwe	7 March	A	
152 Mozambique	14 March	A	
1984			
153 Cape Verde	11 May	A	
154 Belize	29 June	A	
155 Guinea	11 July	A	
156 Western Samoa	23 August	S—as from 1.1.62	
157 Angola	20 September	A	Reservation
158 Seychelles	8 November	A	
1985			
159 Comoros	21 November	A	
1986			
160 Saint Christopher and Nevis	14 February	S—as from 19.9.83	
161 Equatorial Guinea	24 July	A	
162 Antigua and Barbuda	6 October	S—as from 1.11.81	
1989			
163 Kiribati	5 January	S—as from 12.7.79	

	OFFICIAL DATE OF REGISTRATION	TYPE OF ACT RECEIVED	REMARKS
1991			
164 Bhutan	10 January	A	
165 Maldives	18 June	A	
166 Namibia*	22 August	S—as from 21.3.90	
167 Brunei	14 October	A	
168 Latvia	24 December	A	

On 31 December 1991, 168 States were party to the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949.

* Namibia: Instruments of accession to the Geneva Conventions and their Additional Protocols were deposited by the United Nations Council for Namibia on 18 October 1983. The depositary State advised the ICRC that the said accession to the Conventions has now become void. In an instrument deposited on 22 August 1991, Namibia declared its succession to the Geneva Conventions, which were previously applicable pursuant to South Africa's accession on 31 March 1952.

Note — The declarations of continuity deposited by *Lithuania* on 10 October 1991 and *Estonia* on 19 November 1991 concerning the two Geneva Conventions of 1929 were registered by the depositary State on 20 December 1991 (Lithuania) and on 26 November 1991 (Estonia).

The above declarations took effect retroactively from 6 September 1991, the date on which the Soviet Union recognized the independence of the Baltic States.

States party to the Protocols of 8 June 1977

PROTOCOL			OFFICIAL DATE	TYPE OF ACT	
I	II		OF REGISTRATION	RECEIVED	REMARKS
1978					
1	1	Ghana	28 February	R	
2	2	Libya	7 June	A	
Date of entry into force of the Protocols: 7 December 1978					
3	3	El Salvador	23 November	R	
1979					
4	4	Ecuador	10 April	R	
5	5	Jordan	1 May	R	
6	6	Botswana	23 May	A	
7		Cyprus	1 June	R	Protocol I only
8	7	Niger	8 June	R	
9	8	Yugoslavia	11 June	R	Declaration
10	9	Tunisia	9 August	R	
11	10	Sweden	31 August	R	Reservation; Int. Commission
1980					
12	11	Mauritania	14 March	A	
13	12	Gabon	8 April	A	
14	13	Bahamas	10 April	A	
15	14	Finland	7 August	R	Declaration; Int. Commission
16	15	Bangladesh	8 September	A	
17	16	Laos	18 November	R	
1981					
18		Viet Nam	19 October	R	Protocol I only
19	17	Norway	14 December	R	Int. Commission
1982					
20	18	Rep. of Korea	15 January	R	Declaration
21	19	Switzerland	17 February	R	Reservations; Int. Commission
22	20	Mauritius	22 March	A	
23		Zaire	3 June	A	Protocol I only
24	21	Denmark	17 June	R	Reservation; Int. Commission
25	22	Austria	13 August	R	Reservations; Int. Commission
26	23	Saint Lucia	7 October	A	
27		Cuba	25 November	A	Protocol I only

1983

28	24	Tanzania	15 February	A	
29	25	United Arab Emirates	9 March	A	Declaration
30		Mexico	10 March	A	Protocol I only
31		Mozambique	14 March	A	Protocol I only
32	26	Saint Vincent and the Grenadines	8 April	A	
33	27	China	14 September	A	Reservation
34	28	Congo	10 November	A	
35		Syria	14 November	A	Protocol I only; Declaration
36	29	Bolivia	8 December	A	
37	30	Costa Rica	15 December	A	

1984

	31	France ¹	24 February	A	Protocol II only
38	32	Cameroon	16 March	A	
39	33	Oman	29 March	A	Declaration
40	34	Togo	21 June	R	Int. Commission ²
41	35	Belize	29 June	A	
42	36	Guinea	11 July	A	
43	37	Central African Rep.	17 July	A	
45	38	Western Samoa	23 August	A	
45		Angola	20 September	A	Protocol I only; Declaration
46	39	Seychelles	8 November	A	
47	40	Rwanda	19 November	A	

1985

48	41	Kuwait	17 January	A	
49	42	Vanuatu	28 February	A	
50	43	Senegal	7 May	R	
51	44	Comoros	21 November	A	
52	45	Holy See	21 November	R	Declaration
53	46	Uruguay	13 December	A	Int. Commission ³
54	47	Suriname	16 December	A	

1986

55	48	Saint Christopher and Nevis	14 February	A	
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¹ When acceding to Protocol II, France sent a communication concerning Protocol I.

² By a declaration of 21 November 1991.

³ By a declaration of 17 July 1990.

56	49	Italy	27 February	R	Declarations; Int. Commission
57	50	Belgium	20 May	R	Declarations; Int. Commission ⁴
58	51	Benin	28 May	A	
59	52	Equatorial Guinea	24 July	A	
60	53	Jamaica	29 July	A	
61	54	Antigua and Barbuda	6 October	A	
62	55	Sierra Leone	21 October	A	
63	56	Guinea-Bissau	21 October	A	
64	57	Bahrain	30 October	A	
65	58	Argentina	26 November	A	Declarations
	59	Philippines	11 December	A	Protocol II only
1987					
66	60	Iceland	10 April	R	Reservation; Int. Commission
67	61	Netherlands	26 June	R	Declarations; Int. Commission
68		Saudi Arabia	21 August	A	Reservation
69	62	Guatemala	19 October	R	
70	63	Burkina Faso	20 October	R	
1988					
71	64	Guyana	18 January	A	
72	65	New Zealand	8 February	R	Declarations; Int. Commission
73		Dem. People's Rep. of Korea	9 March	A	Protocol I only
74		Qatar	5 April	A	Protocol I only; Declaration; Int. Commission ⁵
75	66	Liberia	30 June	A	
76	67	Solomon Islands	19 September	A	
77	68	Nigeria	10 October	A	
1989					
78	69	Gambia	12 January	A	
79	70	Mali	8 February	A	
80		Greece	31 March	R	Protocol I only
81	71	Hungary	12 April	R	Int. Commission ⁶
82	72	Malta	17 April	A	Reservations; Int. Commission

⁴ On 27 March 1987.

⁵ By a declaration of 24 September 1991.

⁶ By a declaration of 23 September 1991.

83	73	Spain	21 April	R	Declarations; Int. Commission
84	74	Peru	14 July	R	
85	75	Liechtenstein	10 August	R	Reservations; Int. Commission
86	76	Algeria	16 August	A	Declarations; Int. Commission
87	77	Luxembourg	29 August	R	
88	78	Côte d'Ivoire	20 September	R	
89	79	Bulgaria	26 September	R	
90	80	USSR ⁷	29 September	R	Declaration; Int. Commission
91	81	Belarus	23 October	R	Int. Commission
1990					
92	82	Ukraine	25 January	R	Declaration; Int. Commission
93	83	Czech and Slovak (F.R.)	14 February	R	
94	84	Barbados	19 February	A	
95	85	Yemen	17 April	R	
96	86	Romania	21 June	R	
97	87	Canada	27 September	R	Reservations; Declarations; Int. Commission
98	88	Paraguay	30 November	A	
1991					
99	89	Canada	14 February	R	Declarations; Int. Commission
100	90	Uganda	13 March	A	
101	91	Djibouti	8 April	A	
102	92	Chile	24 April	R	
103	93	Australia	21 June	R	Declarations
104	94	Maldives	3 September	A	
105	95	Malawi	7 October	A	
106	96	Brunei	14 October	A	
107	97	Poland	23 October	R	
108	98	Latvia	24 December	A	

On 31 December 1991, 108 States were party to Protocol I and 98 to Protocol II.

Twenty-five States had accepted the competence of the International Fact-Finding Commission.

⁷ USSR: When this document went to press, the ICRC did not yet have specific information as to whether the States that made up the former USSR still consider themselves bound by the Conventions and Protocols. This does not apply to Belarus and Ukraine, which remain party to the 1949 Conventions and their Protocols.

TOTALS

I. NUMBER OF STATES MEMBERS OF THE UNITED NATIONS	166
II. 1949 GENEVA CONVENTIONS — States Party	168
of which:	
a) Ratifications	61
b) Accessions	65
c) Declarations of succession	42
III. 1977 ADDITIONAL PROTOCOLS:	
A. PROTOCOL I — States Party	108
of which:	
a) Ratifications	46
b) Accessions	62
<i>Declarations under Article 90</i>	25
B. PROTOCOL II — States Party	98
of which:	
a) Ratifications	43
b) Accessions	55

Notes:

— States Members of the UN or party to the statutes of the International Court of Justice, which are not party to the 1949 Geneva Conventions:

<i>ESTONIA</i> <i>LITHUANIA</i> <i>MARSHALL IS.</i>	<i>MICRONESIA</i> <i>MYANMAR (BURMA)</i> <i>NAURU</i>
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— *Palestine*: On 21 June 1989, the Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs received a letter from the Permanent Observer of Palestine to the United Nations Office at Geneva informing the Swiss Federal Council "that the Executive Committee of the Palestine Liberation Organization, entrusted with the functions of the Government of the State of Palestine by decision of the Palestine National Council, decided, on 4 May 1989, to adhere to the Four Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949 and the two Protocols additional thereto".

On 13 September 1989, the Swiss Federal Council informed the States that it was not in a position to decide whether the letter constituted an instrument of accession, "due to the uncertainty within the international community as to the existence or non-existence of a State of Palestine".

Death of Professor Stanislaw E. Nahlik

The ICRC learned with great sadness of the death on 5 November 1991 of Professor Stanislaw E. Nahlik at the age of 80.

The members of the International Committee and all his close colleagues deeply regret the passing of Professor Nahlik, a renowned humanist who devoted his life to defending and promoting international law.

Professor Nahlik was born on 8 May 1911 in Lwów (Poland), where in 1933 he obtained a master's degree in law and political science at Johann-Casimir University. He entered his country's diplomatic corps in 1936, successively serving at the Polish Consulate General in London and the Polish Embassy in Berne from 1939 to 1946.

After receiving a doctorate in law at Jagellonian University in Cracow in 1948, Professor Nahlik devoted most of his time to teaching in institutions of higher learning, particularly in Cracow and at Nicholas Copernicus University in Toruń.

From 1962 to 1981 he held the Chair of Public International Law at Jagellonian University, where in 1981 he was named Professor Emeritus.

Professor Nahlik's written works, consisting of some 400 books and articles — including about 80 in English, French and German — constitute an impressive collection of studies on various aspects of public international law. Through them he gained considerable renown not only in Poland, where his treatises and manuals on public international law and the law of diplomatic relations, in particular, are still considered authoritative, but also abroad. Professor Nahlik was invited to lecture at universities in some twenty countries and was named doctor *honoris causa* by the University of Bordeaux (in 1973) and the University of Bochum (in 1985).

He was a member of several European law associations and participated in numerous international conferences and meetings of experts, in particular on the protection of cultural property — a subject

that was a speciality of his — and on international humanitarian law.* From 1975 on he also chaired Commission II of the Diplomatic Conference on the Reaffirmation and Development of International Humanitarian Law applicable in Armed Conflicts (Geneva, 1974-1977).

A man of great shrewdness of mind and utmost courtesy, Professor Nahlik was an exceptionally talented educationist who captivated his students and other audiences with his vast knowledge, his gift of expression and sparkling wit. He was profoundly humane and showed his dedication to Red Cross ideals by providing advice on countless occasions over the years to the Polish Red Cross and actively helping, in close cooperation with the ICRC, to spread knowledge of international humanitarian law in Poland and throughout the world. The ICRC will remember Professor Nahlik with admiration and gratitude as an outstanding champion of the humanitarian cause.

* Among Professor Nahlik's most renowned works are two courses given at the Hague Academy of International Law: "La protection internationale des biens culturels en cas de conflit armé" (*Collected Courses of the Hague Academy of International Law*, vol. 120, 1967, pp. 61-136) and "L'extension du statut de combattant à la lumière du Protocol I de Genève de 1977" (*ibid.*, vol. 164, 1979, pp. 171-249), and "A Brief Outline of International Humanitarian Law" (*IRRC*, No. 241, July-August 1984, pp. 187-226).

Books and reviews

LUFTKRIEG UND ZIVILBEVÖLKERUNG

*Doctrine and practice relating to the protection
of civilians against aerial bombardment
up to the outbreak of the Second World War*

In this thesis on the history of law, presented in 1989 at the University of Salzburg, Mr. Hanke* describes the development of military and legal practice and principles relating to aerial bombardment (especially strategic bombing) from the beginnings of aviation up to the outbreak of World War II. The author's interpretation of practice, as an integral part of customary law, is justifiably wide-ranging: he includes not only acts by belligerents, but also public declarations by States in peacetime, attempts at codification and instructions to the armed forces. The thesis is especially interesting when it explains how practice is dependent on national policy concerning aerial warfare; but it does not underrate the importance of legal doctrine for the development of rules of international law on the subject.

After describing the first attempts to prohibit aerial bombardment completely, the author shows that during the First World War the criterion, unusable for "strategic" bombing, of a "defended" locality was replaced in practice by the idea of the military objective: henceforth only attacks aimed at military targets were legitimate, a principle meanwhile embodied in Article 48 of 1977 Additional Protocol I.

Mr. Hanke confirms that two other rules were also in force on the eve of the Second World War: the definition of a military objective by the military advantage conferred by its destruction or neutralization, and the prohibition of attacks on the civilian population as such. Conversely, the author maintains that the ban on indiscriminate attacks was valid in 1939 only for attacks carried out behind the lines, whereas in combat areas only the principles of proportionality limited such attacks. At the start of the Second World War, the belligerents even reaffirmed these rules, although in somewhat vague fashion and reserving the right to reciprocate.

* Heinz Marcus Hanke, *Luftkrieg und Zivilbevölkerung* (Aerial warfare and the civilian population), Verlag Peter Lang, Frankfurt-on-Main, 1991, 310 pp + XIV (in German).

The second part of this study, which the author has said will be devoted to analysing practice during the Second World War, will be awaited with great interest. However, this first volume, supported as it is by numerous references, diagrams and documents, is extremely useful, since it indicates how customary law has led to certain rules that are now codified in Protocol I. Even so, some people still refer to them as “new”!

ADDRESSES OF NATIONAL RED CROSS AND RED CRESCENT SOCIETIES

- AFGHANISTAN (Democratic Republic of) — Afghan Red Crescent Society, Puli Hartan, *Kabul*.
- ALBANIA (Republic of) — Albanian Red Cross, Rue Qamil Guranjaku No. 2, *Tirana*.
- ALGERIA (People's Democratic Republic of) — Algerian Red Crescent, 15 bis, boulevard Mohamed V, *Algiers*.
- ANGOLA — Cruz Vermelha de Angola, Av. Hoji Ya Henda 107, 2. andar, *Luanda*.
- ARGENTINA — The Argentine Red Cross, H. Yrigoyen 2068, 1089 Buenos Aires.
- AUSTRALIA — Australian Red Cross Society, 206, Clarendon Street, *East Melbourne 3002*.
- AUSTRIA — Austrian Red Cross, Wiedner Hauptstrasse 32, Postfach 39, A-1041, *Vienna 4*.
- BAHAMAS — The Bahamas Red Cross Society, P.O. Box N-8331, *Nassau*.
- BAHRAIN — Bahrain Red Crescent Society, P.O. Box 882, *Manama*.
- BANGLADESH — Bangladesh Red Crescent Society, 684-686, Bara Magh Bazar, Dhaka-1217, G.P.O. Box No. 579, *Dhaka*.
- BARBADOS — The Barbados Red Cross Society, Red Cross House, Jemmotts Lane, *Bridgetown*.
- BELGIUM — Belgian Red Cross, 98, chaussée de Vleurgat, 1050 Brussels.
- BELIZE — Belize Red Cross Society, P.O. Box 413, *Belize City*.
- BENIN (Republic of) — Red Cross of Benin, B.P. No. 1, *Porto-Novo*.
- BOLIVIA — Bolivian Red Cross, Avenida Simón Bolívar, 1515, *La Paz*.
- BOTSWANA — Botswana Red Cross Society, 135 Independence Avenue, P.O. Box 485, *Gaborone*.
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- BULGARIA — Bulgarian Red Cross, 1, Boul. Biruzov, 1527 *Sofia*.
- BURKINA FASO — Burkina Be Red Cross Society, B.P. 340, *Ouagadougou*.
- BURUNDI — Burundi Red Cross, rue du Marché 3, P.O. Box 324, *Bujumbura*.
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- CHILE — Chilean Red Cross, Avenida Santa Maria No. 0150, Correo 21, Casilla 246-V., *Santiago de Chile*.
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- CÔTE D'IVOIRE — Croix-Rouge de Côte d'Ivoire, B.P. 1244, *Abidjan*.
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- THE CZECH AND SLOVAK FEDERAL REPUBLIC — Czechoslovak Red Cross, Thunovská 18, 118 04 *Prague 1*.
- DENMARK — Danish Red Cross, Dag Hammarskjölds Allé 28, Postboks 2600, 2100 *København Ø*.
- DJIBOUTI — Société du Croissant-Rouge de Djibouti, B.P. 8, *Djibouti*.
- DOMINICA — Dominica Red Cross Society, P.O. Box 59, *Roseau*.
- DOMINICAN REPUBLIC — Dominican Red Cross, Apartado postal 1293, *Santo Domingo*.
- ECUADOR — Ecuadorean Red Cross, calle de la Cruz Roja y Avenida Colombia, *Quito*.
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- EL SALVADOR — Salvadorean Red Cross Society, 17C. Pte y Av. Henri Dunant, *San Salvador*, Apartado Postal 2672.
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- FUJI — Fiji Red Cross Society, 22 Gorrie Street, P.O. Box 569, *Suva*.
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- GHANA — Ghana Red Cross Society, National Headquarters, Ministries Annex A3, P.O. Box 835, *Accra*.
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- KENYA — Kenya Red Cross Society, P.O. Box 40712, Nairobi.
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- KUWAIT — Kuwait Red Crescent Society, (provisional address) Al Salmiya, Kuwait.
- LAO PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC — Lao Red Cross, B.P. 650, Vientiane.
- LATVIA — Latvian Red Cross Society, 28, Skolas Street, 226 300 Riga.
- LEBANON — Lebanese Red Cross, rue Spears, Beirut.
- LESOTHO — Lesotho Red Cross Society, P.O. Box 366, Maseru 100.
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- MAURITIUS — Mauritius Red Cross Society, Ste Thérèse Street, Curepipe.
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- MONACO — Red Cross of Monaco, 27 boul. de Suisse, Monte Carlo.
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- MOROCCO — Moroccan Red Crescent, B.P. 189, Rabat.
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- QATAR — Qatar Red Crescent Society, P.O. Box 5449, Doha.
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- SAINT VINCENT AND THE GRENADINES — Saint Vincent and the Grenadines Red Cross Society, P.O. Box 431, Kingstown.
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- SAO TOME AND PRINCIPE — Sociedade Nacional da Cruz Vermelha de São Tomé e Príncipe, C.P. 96, São Tomé.
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- SPAIN — Spanish Red Cross, Eduardo Dato, 16, *Madrid 28010*.
- SRI LANKA (Dem. Soc. Rep. of) — The Sri Lanka Red Cross Society, 106, Dharmapala Mawatha, *Colombo 7*.
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- USA — American Red Cross, 17th and D Streets, N.W., *Washington, D.C. 20006*.
- URUGUAY — Uruguayan Red Cross, Avenida 8 de Octubre 2990, *Montevideo*.
- U.S.S.R. — The Alliance of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies of the U.S.S.R., 1, Tcheremushkinskii proezd 5, *Moscow, 117036*.
- VENEZUELA — Venezuelan Red Cross, Avenida Andrés Bello, N.º 4, Apartado, 3185, *Caracas 1010*.
- VIET NAM (Socialist Republic of) — Red Cross of Viet Nam, 68, rue Ba-Triêu, *Hanoi*.
- WESTERN SAMOA — Western Samoa Red Cross Society, P.O. Box 1616, *Apia*.
- YEMEN (Republic of) — Yemeni Red Crescent Society, P.O. Box 1257, *Sana'a*.
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- ZAIRE — Red Cross Society of the Republic of Zaire, 41, av. de la Justice, Zone de la Gombe, B.P. 1712, *Kinshasa*.
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